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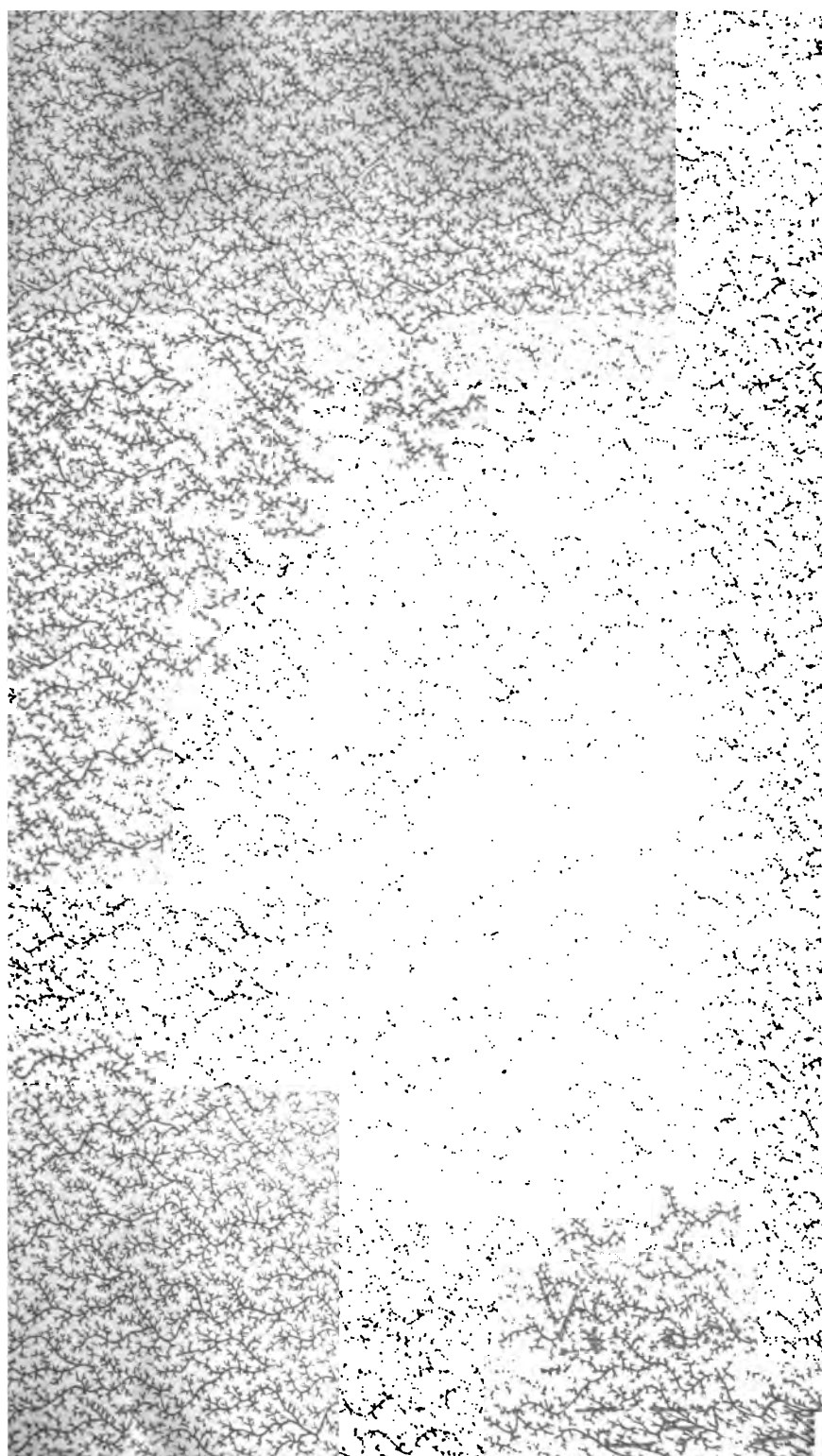
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DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

A
TREATISE
ON THE
DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

BY ROBERT WILSON, A.M.

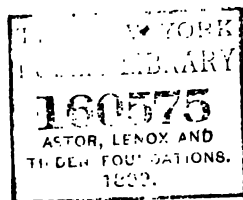
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INTRODUCTION.

THE author of the following sheets offers his work to the attention of the public with a due impression of the awful responsibility that attaches itself to every one who attempts to expound the message which God has sent to guilty men. He wishes to bear on his mind the following denunciations, uttered by him who "spake as never man spake," and "in whose tongue was the law of kindness."—"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him

the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

It may be proper in this place to remind the reader, that all knowledge consists of facts and truths. These may be viewed as having a reference to things human, or things divine. Human knowledge consists of facts and truths which are attainable by experience and reasoning; and divine knowledge consists of facts and truths which are unattainable by human investigation, being placed without the sphere of human perception, and which, therefore, in order to be known, must be revealed by God himself. As it regards the *facts* of human knowledge, we arrive at them by experience and the testimony of others; and as it regards the *truths* of human knowledge, we come at

them by intuition, reasoning, and, in the case of unacquaintance with science, by belief in the affirmation of others. Now, as it regards the acquiring of divine knowledge, its facts and truths must be implicitly admitted on the testimony of God; which testimony may be considered as direct or indirect. The *direct* testimony of God is exhibited in the case of the prophets and apostles, and the *indirect* in the case of those who have received that testimony from them either orally, traditionally, or by written documents. Again, there can be no doubt, that divine wisdom provided ample means of conviction for those to whom God revealed himself by direct testimony; and it is as reasonable to suppose, that God would not have left his testimony, when communicated by the original instruments, to rest on their unsupported authority: hence we find all the apostles and prophets, in attestation of their mission, confidently appealing to the accomplishment of prophecies, or the performance of

miracles. Our duty, then, in reference to the agents employed in the communication of the divine will, is to ascertain the validity of their mission, the sincerity and competency of their evidence, or the genuineness and integrity of their writings. Having satisfied ourselves as to these matters, we must next implicitly rely on their declarations concerning the facts and truths of divine knowledge. And the mode of ascertaining the import of those declarations, it is evident, must be the same as that adopted in the examination of merely human productions; for were the way of finding their meaning mysterious, they would then cease to be considered as a revelation, and the mode of attaining their meaning would justly claim right to that title.

We may further remark, that many of the truths of divine knowledge are founded on facts, some of which are of human, and others of divine origin. Thus the revealed truth that

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God is the governor of the world, is founded on a divine fact—the creation of the world by divine power : and the revealed truth that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for the sins of men, is founded on a fact of human knowledge, viz. the fact of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which was effected by human means. We must, therefore, in the examination of Scripture, attentively consider whether that which is divinely testified is a fact or a truth ; and if a fact only, it is evident, that we ought not to found on that fact any truth which cannot stand the test of the soundest reasoning. Hence we must always distinguish between a truth that is expressly revealed, and one that is only inferred. Concerning a revealed truth there can be no mistake, provided we have a thorough understanding of the terms in which it is communicated ; but concerning an inferred truth, we ought always to exercise the utmost caution, for the particular truth in this case rests not on divine testimony, but on human reason-

ing. Instances of the application of this remark will be exhibited in various parts of the following work.

The spirit in which our investigations should be conducted, may be well expressed in the language of one of the authors whose sentiments are about to be examined. "The first question for us, as professed Christians," says he, "is a question of *fact*. Let us endeavour to forget it altogether as a question of polemic theology; for if we regard it in this light, it becomes mingled with so many of the passions and interests of our nature, that we shall soon find ourselves involved in endless and inextricable mazes. We must separate the exercise of the understanding from the tendencies of feeling and imagination, and be prepared to follow the light of scriptural testimony, to whatever conclusions it may lead us. We must train our minds to the hardihood of abstract thinking; and inquire—not, what will be the

consequences of the admission—or what other principles will be involved in it—or what shall we think on other collateral subjects; but to one point alone direct our attention, **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?**—Another writer of the same school observes, that “the application of Lord Bacon’s philosophy to the study of external nature, was a happy epoch in the history of physical science. It is not long since this application has been extended to the study of moral and intellectual phenomena. All that we contend for is, that our subject should have the benefit of the same application; and we count it hard, while, in every other department of inquiry, a respect for truth is found sufficient to repress the appetite for system-building; that theology, the loftiest and most inaccessible of all the sciences, should still remain infected with a spirit so exploded, and so unphilosophical.”—“The philosopher should separate the exercises of the understanding from the tendencies of the fancy or of the

heart. He should be prepared to follow the light of evidence, though it may lead him to conclusions the most painful and melancholy. He should train his mind to all the hardihood of abstract and unfeeling intelligence. He should give up every thing to the supremacy of argument, and be able to renounce, without a sigh, all the tenderest prepossessions of infancy, the moment that truth demands of him the sacrifice."

As it will be seen in the perusal of the following pages, the principle of investigation which the author has adopted is that which, in theory at least, is universally approved, and which cannot be expressed in language more appropriate than that used by a writer whose sentiments are congenial with those of the authors just quoted.—"Judge," says he, "of the meaning of every passage of Scripture in connexion and consistency with what precedes and follows it."—From this rule the author has not

consciously deviated, unless in such cases as do not, in his opinion, admit of its application.

Finally, the author particularly wishes it to be understood, that he does not, in the following work, come forward in the capacity of a controversialist, but in that of a sincere inquirer into the Scripture evidence for opinions that have been long cherished and defended by many of the wise and good in different ages of Christianity. Of controversy he entertains an opinion similar to that of a celebrated divine of the present day, who says, "Controversy is, indeed, unfavourable to piety, and to every Christian feeling: it is too commonly the food of malevolence, rancour, and obstinacy; but the examination and comparison of the different parts of Scripture, and the attention to the revealed counsels of God which religious inquiry induces, are favourable to the growth of vital religion."

That the publication of the following work may subserve the cause of truth, and promote the interests of piety, is an object of the author's fondest hopes and most earnest wishes.

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ON THE

# DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

ON THE DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AS MANIFESTED IN  
THE PLAN OF HUMAN REDEMPTION, ACCORDING  
TO THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

THE wise man assures us, that “ God hath made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions,” Eccl. vii. 29. His belief in the former proposition was grounded on the testimony of God ; and his belief in the latter, on his own experience and observation, as well as the history of preceding ages. In the former proposition we have an agent and a subject—God the Creator, and man the creature. In the latter proposition taken with the former, we have a twofold state of that subject—a state of original *rectitude*—“ God made man *upright*,” and a state of subsequent *delinquency*—“ but they have sought out many inventions.”

First, let us remark concerning the agent and subject. 1st, The agent. Scripture uniformly declares, that God, the Creator of all things, is a Spirit—infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; both in reference to his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. 2nd, The subject. From the same source we learn, that man, the creature, possesses a rational soul, as well as an animal body; for it is said, that “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,” Gen. ii. 7.

Secondly, we remark concerning man's twofold state. 1st, His state of original rectitude,—“he was made *upright*,” that is, he was made in the image of God; (Gen. i. 26.) which image was of an intellectual and a moral nature. Man resembled his Creator intellectually and morally, *viz.* in the *knowledge* of his understanding, the *righteousness* of his will, and the *holiness* of his dispositions. That the divine image, as impressed on the creature, consisted in these properties, is evident from the declaration of an inspired apostle—“Put on the new man, which is renewed in *knowledge*, after the image of him that created him.”—“Put on the new man, which after God is created in *righteousness* and true *holiness*.” Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.

2ndly, The state of man's delinquency. This division of the subject leads us to consider the relation that originally subsisted between God the Creator, and man the creature. 1. The work of creation gave

the Creator an absolute authority over the life, both moral and natural, of his creature man. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over *all*." Ps. ciii. 19. Not only had the Creator authority over man by *right*, but by the *end* for which man was created; which end was twofold—the glory of God, and man's own happiness. This twofold end could not have been contemplated, unless man should have been placed under infinite wisdom, unbounded goodness, almighty power, inviolable truth, and inflexible justice. That God's glory and man's happiness were consulted in creation, is abundantly testified in holy writ. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." Prov. xvi. 4. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Ps. xxxiii. 5. The same conclusion may be drawn from the design of man's subsequent restoration to the divine favour and image. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*."—"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men*." Luke ii. 10, 13, 14.

2. Man, thus qualified and designed to be a subject of divine government, was, by divine wisdom, placed under a particular law for trial of his allegiance to his Creator. "The LORD God *commanded* the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17. Hence it appears, that the law of trial under which man was placed, was of a *positive* and not of a *moral* nature, being suited to his state of moral rectitude ; and being a *prohibition*, not an *injunction*, it thus afforded the utmost facility of compliance.

3. We are informed that "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." Gen. iii. 1. As a proof of his subtlety, we have an awful instance in his successful attempt on the human species, by enticing the woman to eat of the forbidden tree, saying, "Ye shall not surely die : for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened ; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," ver. 5. The principle of curiosity, or the desire of knowledge, which was implanted in the human breast for wise and benevolent purposes, was caught in the tempter's snare ; reason, which was given to direct man in his pursuits and enjoyments, being allowed to lie dormant, while the organs of sense continued to operate in all their original perfection. Transgression of the divine command followed as a natural result ; for, "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat," ver. 6. Had the fruit not been sweet to the taste, and agreeable to the sight, it is probable that the attempt to ensnare the principle of

curiosity, and thus gain the will, would not have succeeded; but herein lay the trial. The woman, urged by a principle of affection, prevails on her husband to eat also. On the other hand, the strength of the man's affection, and other concurring circumstances, induced him to lose sight of the divine prohibition, or, for the moment, to doubt the infliction of the threatened punishment; for the woman "gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat," ver. 6.

4. Death, the penalty annexed to transgression, was not, at the time of transgressing, inflicted in its ultimate operations, although we may conceive, that the seeds of death were then sown in the human constitution. The threatening, in a more particular manner, was denounced a second time—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. iii. 19. This renewal of the threatening, we may well conceive, was made for the purpose of impressing on the minds of the first pair the certainty of the original denunciation's being accomplished. Alluding to this momentous event, the apostle Paul assures us, that, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Rom. v. 12. Now sin may be considered either as actual or relative: relative sin is *guilt*; which term denotes the relation that subsists between a righteous Judge and an offending criminal: and actual sin consists in *dominion* and *impurity*, which are displayed in the irregularity and insubordination of the affections and appetites. The effect of these is *misery*,

which consists in a privation of divine fellowship, a sense of condemnation, spiritual imbecility, and actual endurance of sufferings, both corporeal and spiritual.

5. What the first man became by his fall, the same must all his posterity be by nature : for the inspired penman informs us, (Gen. v. 3.) that Adam begat children in his own likeness, after his image ; and the apostle Paul confirms this declaration by assuring us, that “ *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Rom. iii. 23.

6. On reviewing the apostate state of man, two questions present themselves ; first, Can infinite Wisdom devise a plan which shall effect the salvation of man consistently with the unsullied honour of the divine perfections ? and secondly, Will infinite goodness and power undertake and execute that plan ? To answer these questions in the affirmative, independently of divine revelation, would baffle the energies of the most exalted intelligence in creation. We are borne out in drawing this conclusion, by the authority of an inspired apostle, who exclaims, “ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how *unsearchable* are his judgments, and his ways *past finding out* ! Who [by unassisted reason] *hath known* the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his *counsellor* ? ” Rom. xi. 33, 34.

Having thus cursorily considered man’s original state of rectitude, and his subsequent state of delinquency, we come next to consider his ultimate state of recovery to the divine favour and image. The

volume of inspiration informs us, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. This declaration not only gives satisfactory answers to the foregoing interrogatories, but completely annihilates all pretensions to merit in reference to the work of human salvation: there being "nothing in the creature that can constitute the reason for which spiritual blessings are dispensed to the guilty."—"To the primary determinations, and consequent acts, of the will of God as a SOVEREIGN, must all the glory of human salvation be ascribed." The sovereignty of God, as manifested in the salvation of man, will more clearly appear, if we consider the testimony of Scripture in reference to the source, medium, state, requirements, and privileges of salvation.

First, concerning the source of salvation; "*God so loved the world,*" &c. Hence it appears that the *love* of God is the source of human salvation. This love was not that which displays itself in *complacency*; for although man, in his original state, was pronounced *very good*, and consequently was an object of God's complacent regard; yet we find that mankind, subsequently to their fall, ceased to have any claims on the divine complacency; for it is said, that "God repented that he had made man." Gen. vi. 6. The love, however, with which God loved the world was a love of *compassion*,—a love which entered on a plan for rescuing sinful man from irremediable



ruin,—a plan by which “whosoever believeth *should not perish*.” So far was man from being an object of the divine complacency, that, according to the award of justice, he deserved to be an object of God’s righteous displeasure; for the Scripture assures us that “God commendeth his *love* to us, in that, while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us;” intimating, at the same time, that “when we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” Rom. v. 8, 10. To assure us of the reality of God’s compassion to our race, and to encourage all to rely on it in the appointed way, the Scripture gives us not merely a bare declaration, but the solemn oath of God himself; “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways: for *why* will ye die, O house of Israel?” Ezek. xxiii. 11. Nor are we to suppose that God was “the God of the Jews, and not of the Gentiles also,” by restricting the exercise of his compassion to the house of Israel; for it is declared, that the Lord is good to *all*, and his tender mercies are over *all his works*.” Ps. cxlv. 9. And such was the intenseness of his love to “the *world*, that he gave his *only-begotten Son*” to die for it. Now if we be asked what was the cause of this love of compassion to a guilty world, we can give no other answer than what Scripture supplies; it was in the nature of God to do so, for “God is love,” 1 John iv. 8. Hence it follows, that if the source of salvation lay in

the divine compassion, and the cause of that compassion subsisted in the divine nature, salvation itself must be the fruit, not of strict equity, but of sovereign mercy.

Secondly, concerning the medium of salvation.—“God so loved the world that he *gave his only-begotten Son* ;” and, in accordance with this gift, “God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” 2 Cor. v. 19. Further, this reconciliation was effected, not *mediately* by the mere fulfilment of the *prophetical* office, but *immediately* by the performance of *priestly* functions ; for him “God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his *blood*.” Rom. iii. 25. Again, Christ is constituted not only *a* medium, but the *only* medium ; “for there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a *ransom* for all, to be testified in due time :” (1 Tim. ii. 6.) “neither is there salvation in *any other* ; for there is *none other* name under heaven given among men, whereby *we must be saved*.” Acts iv. 12. Nor are we to suppose that Christ’s appointment to the office of mediator between a holy God and sinful creatures, could have resulted from any desert in man ; for we are assured that “he that *spared not* his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall with him *freely* give us all things,” Rom. viii. 32. And not only is merit, but solicitation, on the part of man excluded ; for Christ was “delivered by the *determinate counsel* and foreknowledge of God.”

Acts ii. 23. Hence it follows, from a consideration of the medium of salvation, that salvation itself originated in the sovereign wisdom and mercy of God.

Thirdly, concerning the state of salvation. 1st, In reference to this world—"Who hath *saved* us, and called with a holy calling, not according to our *works*, but according to *his own purpose and grace*, which was given us *in Christ Jesus* before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. Thus it appears, that the state of salvation in which the people of God are placed in this world, is not merited by righteousness performed by them, either previously or subsequently to their enjoyment of the favour of God; but is the fruit of a gracious purpose formed before the foundation of the world; and consequently it must be traced not to the equity, but to the sovereignty of God. 2d, The state of salvation in reference to the future world—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared* for you from the foundation of the world." Matth. xxv. 34. As the present state of salvation was effected *through Jesus Christ*, so also was the future; for Christ, "being made perfect, became the *author* of *eternal* salvation to all them that obey him." Heb. v. 9. And not only was Jesus appointed a *priest* to *procure* for, but a *king* to *confer*, salvation on his people; for they are represented as thus saying—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and *hath made* us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 6. Without doubt, therefore,

the future, as well as the present, state of salvation has sprung from the sovereign exercise of divine love.

Fourthly, concerning the requirements of salvation, we observe that, although divine wisdom has suited their nature to the present condition of man, yet it will appear, that their appointment in the plan of salvation originated in the will of the supreme Being. 1st, Concerning *repentance*. The *will* of God has connected repentance with salvation as a prerequisite duty—"The Lord is not *willing* that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. iii. 9. The same may be said of the *authority* of God, for "God *commandeth* all men every where to repent." Acts xvii. 30. Finally, the *appointment* of repentance as a requirement in the work of salvation, is connected with the mediatorial office of Jesus Christ; for "him hath God exalted unto his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel." Acts v. 31. From these passages it is evident, that how suitable soever repentance is to the present condition of man, its order in the work of salvation was appointed by an act of the divine sovereignty.

2nd, *Faith* in Jesus Christ is also a requirement of divine institution—"whosoever *believeth* in him." There can be no doubt, that if Jesus Christ is the meritorious cause of salvation, the appointment of faith in him (that is, belief of the testimony concerning him, and a reception of the promises through him)

exhibits the marks of divine wisdom and sovereign goodness. "Before *faith came*," says an apostle, "we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which *should afterwards be revealed*." Gal. iii. 23. "Where is *boasting* then? It is excluded. By what law? of *works*? Nay, but by the law of *faith*." Rom. iii. 27. "It is of *faith*, that it might be by *grace*." Rom. iv. 16. We therefore come to the same conclusion in reference to faith as to repentance.

The third requirement is submission to the authority, and love to the person, of Jesus Christ. 1st, Concerning submission to the authority of Christ. First, his own exhortation to his hearers—"Take *my yoke* upon you." Matth. xi. 29. We have also the acknowledgment of the apostle Paul—"Being not without law to God, but *under the law to Christ*." 1 Cor. ix. 21. It is likewise represented as necessary to the enjoyment of a future state of happiness—"He became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that *obey him*." Heb. v. 9. 2nd, Love to Jesus Christ will appear to be an appointed requirement, if we consider it as the principle of acceptable obedience—"If ye *love me*, keep my commandments;" (John xiv. 15.) as meeting a recompense—"He that loveth me *shall be loved* of my Father;" (John xiv. 21.) and as exempting the subjects of it from a tremendous denunciation—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

It follows therefore, from a review of the requirements of salvation, viz. repentance, faith, and obe-

dience to Christ, that salvation itself originated in the sovereign mercy of God.

Fifthly, the *privileges* of salvation are such as denote a sovereign origin. Let us consider the following: 1st, *Forgiveness of sins*—"Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the *forgiveness of sins*, according to the *riches of his grace*." Eph. i. 7. 2. *Adoption into the family of God*—For "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the *adoption of sons*." Gal. iv. 5. And as believers in Jesus Christ are adopted into the family of God, they consequently become "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ," and are entitled to an *eternal inheritance*. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being *predestinated* according to the *purpose* of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. 3rd, *Election out of the world by the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit*—"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath

called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. "Having made known to us the mystery of his will, *according to his good pleasure*, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might *gather together in one* all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Eph. i. 9, 10. 4th, Holiness—"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth together unto an *holy temple* in the Lord." Eph. ii. 19, 21. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath *chosen* us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be *holy*, and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 3, 4. 5th, *A glorious resurrection from the dead*—"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the *likeness* of his *resurrection*." Rom. vi. 5. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the *redemption* of the *purchased possession*, unto the *praise* of his *glory*." Eph. i. 13, 14.

Thus it appears, from the testimony of Scripture, that the *privileges* of the gospel salvation are, in their origin,

entirely dependent on the sovereign mercy of God ; and as we have also seen, that the *source, medium, state, and requirements* of salvation are equally to be ascribed to the unsolicited and unmerited mercy of God ; it remains for us to examine the evidence which is adduced in favour of a *sovereign application* of the benefits of salvation. Those who hold that the benefits of salvation are sovereignly applied, are divisible into two classes : the one believing that they were designed and purchased only for a limited number of mankind, and consequently are sovereignly communicated to those for whom they were designed and purchased ; the other, that they were designed and purchased for all the human race ; but as none, say they, will accept the offered salvation but those who are influenced by divine grace, and as God is not bound to bestow his grace but as he pleases, they maintain that God acts as a sovereign in bestowing that qualifying grace, and, consequently, that the benefits of salvation are sovereignly applied to those who are made the recipients of them. The other division of the Christian world, who believe that the benefits of salvation are not sovereignly applied, are also divisible into two classes : the one believing that divine aid is not necessary either for conversion or sanctification ; the other, that it is necessary but not irresistible, they understanding irresistible grace to be that which effectually secures the voluntary submission of the human to the divine will.

In the first class of the first division stands the late



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Rev. John Brown, of Haddington ; and as his sentiments are fully expressed in his definitions of Election, Reprobation, and Perseverance, as given in his Dictionary of the Bible, which definitions are supported by numerous references to the Scriptures of truth ; it has been thought proper to select him, he being also a writer who possesses considerable authority on that side of the question.

Still more celebrated is the late **Rev. Thomas Scott**, who ranks in the second class of the first division ; and as his Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance was revised by him subsequently to the publication of his more elaborate work on the same subject, it has been thought advisable to adhere to that epitome, it not being the writer's intention to enter the lists of controversy, but simply to subject the opinions of his authors to the test of philosophical inquiry, making the authoritative import of the holy Scriptures the only ground of appeal.

It might have been deemed unnecessary to add any more authors to our list ; but the well-earned honour of the advocate for Protestantism, the **Rev. Joseph Fletcher, A. M.** who holds the highly responsible situation of tutor in a theological academy, calls our attention to a work, which is the latest, and doubtless one of the best, that has been written on the side which he espouses.

CHAPTER II.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE
THAT ARE REFERRED TO BY THE LATE REV.
JOHN BROWN, IN HIS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE,
UNDER THE ARTICLE—ELECTION.

“ELECTION, according to the Scripture,” says the article, “is an act of God, in which he, as eternal, unchangeable, infinitely wise, good, gracious, sovereign, and faithful Jehovah, intending to manifest the glory of his own perfections, particularly of his power, wisdom, sovereignty, grace, and mercy, from all eternity, foreknew, and forechose to everlasting salvation, and all the benefits thereof, some particular persons of mankind, whom he pleased, and but the smaller number, and as permitted, or to be permitted, to fall into sin and misery, from which they could not recover themselves; and fore-appointed them to salvation, into conformity with Christ, and to an adoption into his family, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with him; and without regarding any foreseen qualities in them, whether natural or moral, as his motive, hath, of his own mere will and sovereign grace and good pleasure, from eternity, chosen them in Christ as their head; and unalterably ordained and appointed

them to obtain their everlasting life in and through him, and inscribed their names in his book of life; and thus distinguished them from the rest of mankind, who were left in their corruption, and the misery thereby deserved; and in the same wise and unchangeable counsel, fixed the mediation of Christ, effectual calling to him, spiritual union with him, and an interest in, and partaking of him and his righteousness and fulness, together with faith and holiness, as means of their eternal salvation."

As our author has interspersed his proofs, and thus divided the definition into sundry parts, it will be proper to consider these parts with their respective proofs, in order that we may more clearly perceive the particular application which our author designed.

I. "Election, according to the Scripture, is an act of God, in which he, as eternal, unchangeable, infinitely wise, good, gracious, sovereign, and faithful Jehovah, intending to manifest the glory of his own perfections, particularly of his power, wisdom, sovereignty, grace, and mercy—"

1st, Eph. iii. 10. Quote we from the eighth verse. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ; (ver. 9.) and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (ver. 10.) to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might

be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (ver. 11.) according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The subject of the tenth verse is the manifestation of the divine *wisdom* by means of the church of Christ. The question then is, does that wisdom appear in forechoosing certain individuals to faith and eternal salvation? It is evident from the ninth verse, that it was manifest in "*the fellowship of the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God," and was then "revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit," ver. 5. Now the fellowship of the mystery is explained by the apostle himself, (ver. 6.) when he says, "that the *Gentiles* should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same body*, [with the household of God,] and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

2nd, Eph. i. 5, 6, 11. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The intention of our author in quoting these passages was to prove, that the *glory* of God's *grace* and *sovereignty* is manifested in the divine act of election to eternal life. Now we admit, that the glory of God's grace and sovereignty was the subject of the apostle's contem-

plation. The question then is, was that glory manifested in forechoosing a certain number of mankind to faith and salvation? The apostle's words are, "having predestinated *us*." Now, who are meant by the word *us*?—the whole body of believers then within the pale of the church? or the whole body of believers from the foundation of the church until the end of time? The former view cannot be admitted, for then all subsequent believers would be excluded from the benefits to which the others were predestinated. It follows, therefore, that the *fact* which the apostle announces, is, that God has predestinated all believers to the possession of all the privileges and blessings exhibited to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The *doctrine* of election, as held by our author, cannot be founded on that *fact*, for it says nothing of forechoosing to *faith*. Further, we learn from the third verse, that the apostle blessed God, not for the *revelation* of an abstract *truth* concerning the doctrine of election, nor the *revelation* of a particular *fact*, that they as individuals were forechosen to faith and salvation, but for the actual *possession* of blessings which divine grace and sovereignty had attached to the *state* in which all believers in every age stand, and into which they enter by faith in Christ. "Blessed," says he, "be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath blessed us*" (believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles) "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

3rd, Matth. xi. 26. Quote we verse 25th. "At

that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (Ver. 26.) Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." The latter verse was doubtless referred to for the purpose of proving, that the divine sovereignty is displayed in conferring the blessing of divine illumination, and, consequently, faith and eternal salvation. Now the *fact* is, that divine illumination, in a certain degree, was bestowed on the apostles and disciples of our Lord, while the same was withheld from the learned, but interested and prejudiced, among the heads of the Jewish people. We read in Luke x. 23, 24. that Jesus Christ, after having presented to his Father the above-quoted thanksgiving, privately addressed his disciples as follows, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." The conclusion then is, that God acted in a sovereign manner in reference to his selection of the persons who should be the witnesses of Christ's miracles, death, and resurrection, and who should be the first promulgators of the gospel of his Son.

4th, Matth. xx. 15, 16. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." The

former of these verses is the conclusion of a parable, and the latter contains a doctrine which Jesus Christ drew from that parable. There can be no doubt that it was lawful for the householder to enter into what terms he pleased with his voluntary labourers: and if he chose to give those who wrought one hour, as much as those who wrought twelve hours, no one could reasonably murmur against the exercise of such a right. Now, considering the parable in this light, is it reasonable to ground on it the doctrine of a sovereign election of certain individuals to everlasting life, and a sovereign rejection of others? that is, because the householder had a right to exercise sovereign favour towards some, while he acted justly towards others by fulfilling the terms of their own voluntary engagement; therefore, it is lawful for the Divine Being to reward some, and to withhold that reward from others, who are similarly circumstanced. It is admitted that it might be lawful for the Divine Being *to do so*; but this is not the point under consideration. Is it reasonable *for us* to draw that conclusion from the parable? Jesus Christ, who knew his own meaning best, said, "So the last shall be first, and the first last." The same words were used when he concluded his discourse concerning the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of heaven, and concerning the nature of the reward which his faithful followers should receive from him: chap. xix. 30. Their import in that connexion seems to be, that many of those who, in the estimation of men, bid fair

for the kingdom of heaven, shall be rejected at last ; while many of those who seem to be the outcasts of society, shall be honoured as the favourites of heaven. And their import in connexion with the parable under examination seems to be, that the Jewish nation, who vaunted on their covenanted relation to Almighty God, shall be rejected from being his peculiar people ; while the Gentiles, although late in being called into his church, shall be honoured as his " holy nation and peculiar people." See chap. xxi. 43. Rom. x. 19—21. 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. As to the words—" many be called, but few chosen," their general meaning appears to be, that although all the Jews were freely invited to partake of the blessings of the gospel, yet few of them would believe in Jesus Christ, and consequently few should be ranked among the persons put in possession of the gospel salvation.

5th, Rom. ix. 15, 16, 18—23. It is admitted that the passages here referred to, prove the exercise of the divine sovereignty ; but whether sovereignty is exercised in selecting to faith and salvation certain individuals of the human race in preference to others, must be determined by an entire view of the apostle's reasoning. The apostle had formerly shewn, (chap. ii. 25.) that circumcision was profitable to the Jew ; only on condition that he kept the law of Moses ; but that, if he broke it, his circumcision would be of no more benefit to him than if he had not been circumcised. He had also shewn, (chap. iii. 30.) that Jew and Gentile were, by the gospel of Jesus Christ,

placed on the same footing, both being justified by faith in Jesus Christ. In the second verse of the chapter about to be brought under consideration, the apostle, in the spirit of his divine Master, (Luke xix. 41—44.) expresses his unfeigned sorrow for his "brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh: who were Israelites; to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants," &c. ver. 3, 4. Having thus expressed his *sorrow* at their deplorable, but not hopeless condition, he next expresses his *desire* for their *deliverance* from that condition, chap. x. 1. In the former case, he goes on to shew what was not the cause of his sorrow, (ix. 6.) "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect;" and in the latter, what was not the reason of his desire for their salvation—not indifference about religious concerns, "for," says he, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God," x. 2. In the former case, he shews what was the reason of his sorrow—"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law," ix. 31, 32. In the latter case, he shews that the reason of his desire for their salvation, was, that their "zeal was not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God," x. 2, 3. If, then, the preceding analysis is correct, the connexion of the apostle's reasoning is as follows,

chap. ix. 1—3, 6, 30—33. x. 1, &c. Hence it appears, that there are two digressions in the ninth chapter, one contained in the fourth and fifth verses, and the other, from the middle of the sixth to the twenty-ninth verse inclusive. As the principal difficulty in understanding this chapter lies in the second digression, we shall confine our attention to the subjects which it embraces. One thing, however, is evident from the connexion as above-deduced, that, whatever be the particular meaning of the various passages which are introduced into this digression, the combined import of the whole goes to shew, that God as a sovereign acted consistently with perfect rectitude, in devising and appointing the plan of the gospel dispensation, and thus putting an end to the dispensation which had been instituted by the ministration of Moses. See chap. xi. 21—27. Heb. viii. 6—13.

The apostle having declared, that his sorrow for his “kinsmen according to the flesh,” was not caused by a failure of God’s favourable regard to Israel, proceeds in shewing, that the casting off of God’s once favoured people is no proof of such a failure having taken place ; for, as he had formerly said, (chap. ii. 28, 29.) “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God :” so, in like manner, he says, “they are not all Israel which are of Israel ;” (ver. 6,) consequently the rejection of the

course of a few years, however, Abraham's doubts begin again to assail him. Sarah recommends to Abraham to espouse her handmaid, that she might have posterity by her, xvi. 2. The issue of this connexion was a son, whom they named Ishmael.—Abraham was now so fully of opinion that this was the promised heir, that he subsequently disbelieved a special promise of God made in Sarah's favour; (xvii. 15—17.) as appears by his earnestly requesting that Ishmael's life might be preserved, ver. 18. The special promise is repeated—'*Sarah* thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him," ver. 19. Hence it follows, according to the apostle's view, that Ishmael and his descendants were the children of Abraham according to the flesh; and Isaac and his descendants, the children of Abraham according to promise. Now the apostle's reasoning excludes the children of the flesh from being the children of God, but that exclusion consisted in their not being chosen, (Exod. iv. 20. Deut. xiv. 1.) as were the children of the promise, to be the covenanted and typical people of God. The above detailed circumstances, therefore, form the first instance of the divine sovereignty referred to by the apostle.

The second instance is the case of Jacob and Esau: "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any

good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," ver. 10—13. This instance exhibits the sovereignty of God in a more striking manner than even the former, as will appear from the three following particulars. First, the children were born not only of one father, but of one mother. Secondly, their common father was that *one* of whom the promise given to Abraham spoke. Thirdly, the divine purpose is said to have been formed at such a time, when there could not be the shadow of a reason to think that it was in the least influenced by the conduct of the children, whether good or bad. Again, the mother of Isaac was a free woman, while the mother of Ishmael was a bond-woman. It might also have been supposed, that the conduct both of Hagar and her son might have been the cause of Ishmael's rejection; for Hagar, on discovering that she had conceived, despised her mistress; (xvi. 4.) and Ishmael, on the feast-day of Isaac's weaning, suffered himself to fall into the crime of mockery, (xxi. 9.) For *his* offence, Ishmael and his mother were, by the divine permission, exiled from Abraham's house, ver. 10—21. In reference to this event, Sarah said that Ishmael, although Abraham's first-born, should not be heir with her son, ver. 10. At this declaration Abraham was very much grieved, ver. 11. We read, however, that God said unto him, "Let it not be

grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of the bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in *Isaac* shall thy seed be called:" (ver. 12.) that is, Isaac, although the younger, yet being the child of promise, should inherit the right of primogeniture. But in the case of Jacob and Esau, there could arise no mistake concerning the supposed influence which the conduct of either might have on the divine mind, in reference to the act of transferring the rights of primogeniture from Esau the elder to Jacob the younger; for it was said unto Rebecca their mother, while the children were yet unborn, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger," xxv. 2. Agreeably to this promise, circumstances were so ordered, that Jacob, the younger of the two, received both the birth-right and the blessing which belonged to it. See chap. xxv. 33. xxvii. 33—37.

Having thus reviewed the sundry incidents which, doubtless, were in the apostle's view at the time of his writing the chapter under consideration, and which would spontaneously arise in the mind of every well-instructed Jew, it will be proper to enter into a particular examination of these words—"for the children being not yet born," &c. The following paraphrase will, it is deemed, be a sufficient elucidation.—"These twins were not yet born, nor had

they done any good or evil, that the purpose of God in making the younger twin the representative of Abraham's noted posterity, the root of God's ancient church, and the ancestor of that remarkable personage in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, in preference to the elder twin, might depend upon an election made, not on account of works of merit, but from the mere sovereign will of him who had honoured the chosen posterity with such highly exalted privileges." In regard to the subjection of the one to the other, as the natural consequence of the rights of primogeniture, (xxvii. 37.) we may observe, that this did not take place in the persons of the twins, (xxxiii. 3.) but, as the prophecy points out, in their posterities—the nation proceeding from "the elder" twin "shall serve" that proceeding from "the younger." This prophecy, therefore, was, in due time, fully accomplished. See 2 Sam. viii. 14. 1 Kings xxii. 47.

The apostle having passed over the original fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the descendants of Jacob and Esau, refers his Jewish reader to a part of his national history, where the prophet Malachi is introduced as giving an answer from God to the Jews in his day, who seemed to be so blind as not to discover the marks of God's peculiar love to them as a people. "I have loved you, saith the LORD: yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet *I loved Jacob, and hated Esau*, and laid his mountains and

his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down: and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever," chap. i. 2—4. It will appear from the remaining part of the investigation, that the apostle did not quote the words, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," as a direct, but as an indirect proof of God's sovereignty. The desolate state of the Edomites formed no part of the ancient prophecy, but was a collateral proof of the fulfilment of the prophecy; and as the distinction marked out in the prophecy originated in the sovereign will of God, so the desolate condition of the Edomites may be considered as an indirect proof of God's sovereignty towards the descendants of Jacob, and a direct proof of his *justice* against the wicked nation of Edom. This view is confirmed by a reference to Deut. ii. 5. where God gives commandment to the Israelites concerning the Edomites—"Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot-breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession." It was because of the wickedness of Esau's posterity that the above recited calamities were inflicted—"They shall call them the border of *wickedness*." The Jews, in the days of Malachi, were not strangers to the wickedness of the Edomites; for Joel had

formerly denounced the divine vengeance against them, for their cruel conduct towards their brethren, in the time of king Amaziah. The prophecy of Joel runs as follows; "Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land," chap. iii. 19. Amaziah himself seems to have been the first instrument which the Divine Being employed in inflicting the threatened punishment; for it is recorded of him, (2 Kings xiv. 7.) that "he slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Jokthiel unto this day." But the Edomites seem not to have learned wisdom from the divine visitation; for the Psalmist, who had been depicting the forlorn and destitute condition of the captive Jews in Babylon, (Ps. cxxxvii.) makes his complaint to Jehovah in these words; "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof," ver. 7. The prophet Jeremiah, also, who doubtless had in view the same events, prophesied concerning the Edomites thus; "Edom shall be a desolation; every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof," chap. xlix. 17. The prophet Obadiah is still more explicit; "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away his forces, and foreigners

entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;”—“as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head,” ver. 10—16. Now, as Malachi prophesied about two hundred years after the time of Jeremiah and Obadiah, it is reasonable to conclude, that the desolate state in which he declares the Edomites to be, was the accomplishment of the divine threatenings, as denounced by the above-mentioned prophets, on account of their cruel conduct towards Judah in the day of their adversity. Again, the reiterated threatening by Malachi contained in these words; “They shall build, but I will throw down,” was, at subsequent periods, amply fulfilled. We are informed, that about A. M. 3840, Judas Maccabeus terribly harassed them, put about forty thousand of them to the sword, and miserably sacked their capital. We learn also that about A. M. 3874, Johannes Hircanus entirely subdued them, and obliged them to incorporate with the Jewish nation. We are informed that a handful of them escaped from the destruction of Jerusalem, from which time their existence as a people has perished from the earth.

From the foregoing investigation we conclude, that the design which God had in making the following declaration, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I

hated, and laid his mountains and heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness," was to assure his desponding people that he had still a fatherly regard for them, on account of the promises which he had made to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Likewise, the apostle Paul seems to have quoted them, in order to shew, that the descendants of Jacob were, agreeably to the original prophecy, the peculiar people of God, by reason of their being descended from Jacob, who, although the younger, obtained, according to the divine purpose, the rights which naturally belonged to the first-born.

From what has been advanced, we infer, that the scope of the apostle's argument is to shew, that as God, in his sovereign wisdom, made choice of Isaac in preference to Ishmael, and Jacob in preference to Esau, for the purpose of constituting them the ancestors of the promised Messiah, on whose account peculiar privileges were conferred on the nation springing from Isaac and Jacob; so, it was also agreeable to the same system of divine procedure to mark a spiritual distinction even among that people who were literally the people of God, which distinction was grounded on the personal qualifications of those interested in it. Hence it follows, according to the language of the apostle, "they are not all Israel that are of Israel."

The apostle having proved, as above, that the distinction of a natural and spiritual Israel originated in the same sovereignty that made a distinction be-

tween Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau, supposes an objection to be urged, on the ground of the divine rectitude, seeing that the Jews were descendants of Jacob and Isaac, and yet they as a body, according to the apostle's doctrine, came short of justifying righteousness. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," ver. 14, 15. On recurring to the events in Moses' day, we find that while Moses was on the mount with God, the Israelites made a "molten calf" for the purpose of paying it divine homage. When the Lord made known this circumstance to Moses, he added, "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation." *Exod. xxxii. 9, 10.* Moses then intercedes for the people, and prevails; for, we are informed, that "the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people," ver. 14. Yet we find that the Lord had purposed, because of their rebellion, "not to go up with the people" to the promised land, but to appoint his angel to be their guide, saying to Moses, "I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." *Exod. xxxiii. 3.* After further intercession, Moses obtains a promise that God's merciful and protecting presence should go with them,

ver. 14. Moses' mind being more than usually agitated by the conduct of his people, shews his weakness by doubting the promise of God, and asks a sign, saying, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory," ver. 18. The Lord, in great condescension, replies, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy," ver. 19. Now, the manner in which the Lord made his goodness pass before Moses, is detailed in the next chapter, beginning at the fifth verse; "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Thus we see, that when the conduct of the Israelites as a people called for the divine vengeance, the Lord, of his own goodness, spared their lives, and departed from the purpose which he had formed of utterly destroying them. The inference, then, which the apostle would have us to draw from the circumstance which he thus presents to our notice, is, that although the Israelites were the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, divine justice demanded their destruction; but sovereign mercy was pleased to preserve their individual and national existence from immediate vengeance. If such then is the case, as

the apostle would say, there can be no unrighteousness with God in reference to his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in making a distinction between the natural and spiritual Israel, seeing that, even in ancient times, the very existence of the natural Israel depended not so much on God's promises to their forefathers, as on his sovereign mercy and long-suffering kindness.

Before concluding our exposition of this passage, it may be proper to call the attention of the reader to the two following particulars.—1st, That the mercy and compassion spoken of in this passage, have an exclusive reference to the temporal circumstances of the Israelites. A similar use of the word *mercy* occurs in Isaiah xiv. 1. where the prophet, speaking of the restoration of Israel, says, "The LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." Again, Jeremiah exhibits the word, perhaps with greater conformity to the meaning which it has in Exodus, in the thirteenth chapter of his Prophecies, ver. 14. "And I will dash them (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD; I will not pity nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them."

2ndly, That although the *purpose* to have mercy on the idolatrous Israelites was sovereign, yet the exercise of that mercy seems to have been according to an appointed mode; for *repentance*, in this, as in all similar cases, was declared to be of indispensable

necessity; for we read, (chap. xxxiv. 7.)—"forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear" [the impenitent.] The necessity of repentance is explicitly enjoined in 2 Chron. xxx. 9. "For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, *if ye return unto him.*" The exercise of the same mercy, in reference to God's providential goodness, is, in Deut. v. 9. declared to be dependent on love to God, and obedience to his commandments; "For I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate* me; and shewing *mercy* unto thousands of them that *love* me, and keep my commandments."

The apostle next adds, (ver. 16.) "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" the meaning of which is, that those various dispensations of the divine goodness did not originate in the will, or by the merit, of sinful man, but in the sovereign will of God.—Abraham willed that Ishmael should be his heir, but God willed otherwise; Isaac willed that Esau should possess the blessing which was annexed to his forfeited right of primogeniture, but God willed otherwise; Esau ran for venison in order to obtain that blessing, but God willed that he should not receive it: all these things were willed by the same God who willed, at the intercession of Moses, that the Israelites, who, for their idolatry, deserved punishment, should

be preserved in the land of the living, as monuments of his sparing mercy and long-suffering kindness.

As the apostle had given a twofold instance of the divine sovereignty in the case of the election of Isaac and his descendants, and the rejection of Ishmael and his descendants; and in the case of the election of Jacob and rejection of Esau, as heads of their respective nations; so, having given one part of a third instance of the exercise of divine sovereignty, viz. in the preservation of the guilty Israelites, he proceeds to give the other corresponding part, which part is exhibited in the *manner* in which Pharaoh and his people were punished by their overthrow in the Red sea; "Moreover," saith the apostle, "the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth," ver. 17. Here, as in other parts of this chapter, the apostle quotes only in part, leaving the mind of his instructed reader to supply the rest. It is evident that the words, "for this same purpose," are relative, and, consequently, they require us to examine their preceding context. The whole passage, as given in Exod. ix. 15, 16. is as follows; "For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt (finally) *be cut off from the earth*. And in very deed, for *this* cause have I raised thee up," or, as our margin reads it, "made thee to stand." From which it would appear, that the design which God had in preserving

the lives of Pharaoh and his people in the midst of the plagues, was, that his power and glory, as displayed in their utter destruction in the Red sea, "might be declared throughout all the earth."

We are informed, (Exodus i. 8, &c.) that, after Joseph's death, "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply; and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens." Thus this politic prince consulted both the safety and the wealth of his kingdom, by keeping the Israelites in rigorous bondage. This treatment of the Lord's people, however, was not a fortuitous event, neither was the punishment that awaited their cruel masters fortuitous; for the Lord made known to Abraham these things, saying, "Abram, know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall *serve* them; and they shall *afflict* them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall *serve*, will I *judge*; and afterward shall they come out with great substance." Gen. xv. 13, 14. We are again informed, that when God called Moses to be the leader of his people, he addressed him thus; "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard

their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I know their sorrows ; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Exod. iii. 7, 8. The result of Moses' mission was made known to him as follows ; " See, I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh : and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee ; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them." Exod. vii. 1—5. From this we see, that it was the design of God, agreeably to his promise to Abraham, to work many wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and finally to display his power upon Pharaoh and his army, in the Red sea. But to secure these ends, the Divine Being judged it necessary, as the Scripture expresses it, to harden the heart of Pharaoh. From the connexion in which the divine declaration—" I will harden Pharaoh's heart," occurs, none, we should think, could fail to discover its true meaning. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart, seems

to be fully expressed by the English term *obstinacy*; for, in the last quoted passage it is added, "But Pharaoh *shall not hearken* unto you," that is, he would either *refuse* to comply with Moses' request, or, after he had granted it, would *repent* of his compliance. There are several instances in the narrative that confirm this observation. After the first miracle was performed, it is said, "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he *hearkened not* unto them," vii. 13. And in reference to this very same circumstance, we read, that Moses addressed Pharaoh thus; "The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and behold, hitherto thou *wouldest not hear*," ver. 16. Again, we find, that the plague of frogs made considerable impression upon Pharaoh, for "he called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and *I will let the people go*, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD," viii. 8. But, we are informed, that he *repented* of his concession; for, "when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and *hearkened not* unto them, as the LORD had said," ver. 15. Further, the result of the last plague also confirms the truth of our observation; for we read, that "the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence," xi. 1. This actually came to pass, but Pharaoh soon repented of what he had done. The Lord,

knowing his own purposes, and foreseeing the operations of Pharaoh's mind, and those of his people's, communicates to Moses what was to happen, saying, "Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so." xiv. 3, 4. The historian then informs us, that "it was told the king of Egypt, that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants *was turned against* the people," ver. 5. It is also said, that "the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel," ver. 8. Thus we see, that Pharaoh continued stout-hearted and obstinate, both while lying under the pressure of some of the plagues, and after he had consented to let the Israelites go, notwithstanding the rational ground there existed for the prevalence of alarming fears: in other words, he *would not hearken* to the message which God had sent him by Moses. Now, in the transactions above recited, there occurs an apparent contradiction, which is this; it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and also that Pharaoh himself hardened it. In order to solve this difficulty, we must consider the character of Pharaoh, and the motives of his actions. It is evident that Pharaoh was the slave of avarice. It is not less evident, that his avarice led him to be

unjust, and his injustice and avarice combined produced excessive cruelty.

As might be supposed, on natural principles, the appeal which Moses made on behalf of the Lord's people, actually fired his avaricious disposition, and led him, through policy, to adopt a course of conduct still more oppressive to the Israelites. He proudly replies to Moses, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." chap. v. 2. Agreeably, therefore, to the spirit of this resolution, he "commanded, the same day, the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more *give* the people straw to make brick, as heretofore; let them go and *gather* straw for themselves: let there *more* work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein, and let them not regard vain words," ver. 6, 7, 9. In this case we see, that human nature alone was quite sufficient to make Pharaoh more reluctant to let them go than before; hence, in this case, we do not find it said that God hardened his heart. But, as the natural effect of bodily pain is to weaken, for the time being, the strength of any passion, and as one passion naturally counteracts another, so it was found necessary, for the accomplishment of the divine purposes, that Pharaoh's avarice should not be weakened by the natural effect of pain, while he was labouring under the smart of the divine rod, nor by the effect of compassion for his fellow-sufferers, nor by fear of a renewed display

of the divine displeasure. For it is evident, that, if Pharaoh, influenced by any of these motives, had let the Israelites go, then the power of God would not have been so signally displayed, nor his glory so transcendently manifested, as they were in the infliction of the multiplied plagues in Egypt, and in the total destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. That nothing more is meant by God's hardening the heart of Pharaoh and his people, than his preventing his judgments from destroying the power of a previously existing disposition, by communicating a stoutness of heart, which, in such circumstances, would not otherwise have been preserved, is evident from a similar course of the divine procedure, in reference to the punishment of the wicked and idolatrous Canaanites. It is recorded, (Deut. ii. 30.) that God *hardened* the spirit of Sihon, and made his heart *obstinate*, that he might deliver him into the hand of the Israelites. Again it is said (Josh. xi. 19, 20.) that "there was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all other they took in battle; for it was of the Lord to *harden their hearts*, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly." The report of God's wonders in the land of Egypt and the Red Sea, was of such a nature as would have produced, according to the ordinary principles of nature, an overwhelming dread of a people so signally owned of God, and thus, by their declining to encounter the

Israelites, the divine purposes in reference to them would have remained unaccomplished. But, to effect his own ends, the Lord, by his secret influence on their wills, made them stout-hearted, and emboldened them to do what their unrestrained wills would otherwise have done, viz. to attack the forces of Israel, the appointed instruments of their destruction. Now it is quite evident, that there was no new disposition nor principle implanted in the heart or mind of the Egyptians and Canaanites by the divine influence, consequently, the disposition of resistance having previously existed, the act, which was the effect of that disposition, was truly and properly their own; while it might very justly be said, that God hardened their hearts, inasmuch as he prevented their minds from being intimidated by the endurance or anticipation of the overwhelming evils, which, in his sovereign pleasure, he thought proper to manifest. In concluding, we remark, (and the remark is too obvious to need any demonstration,) that no inference having the least bearing upon God's method of dealing with the sculs of men in their individual capacity, can be justly drawn from such a mode of procedure as that which is above delineated.

Viewing the cases of the idolatrous Israelites in the wilderness, and the tyrannical Egyptians in Egypt and the Red Sea, as a twofold instance in which there is a sovereign display of mercy in preserving,* and of justice in punishing, a nation of pre-

sumptuous sinners, the apostle sums up his observations on this part of the subject, by saying, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he willeth, and whom he willeth he hardeneth." Rom. ix. 18. That is, as it was the sovereign will of God that distinguished the posterity of Isaac from that of Ishmael, and the family of Jacob from that of Esau; so it was the same sovereign will that shewed mercy to the idolatrous Israelites on the one hand, and rendered the tyrannical Egyptians stout-hearted on the other, in order that they might, for their wickedness, be finally overthrown in the Red Sea, and thus become noted victims of avenging justice.

The apostle next supposes a Jew to make objection to the divine procedure as follows, "Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" ver. 19. The import of this objection seems to be thus; Since the Jewish nation has been preserved in existence by the sovereign will of God, why doth he, after such a lapse of time, still find fault with the state of those who were indebted to his sovereign mercy, both for that state, and all its privileges? To this cavil the apostle makes answer, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" That is, What is the Jewish nation more than any other nation, that it should cavil with the dispensations of God? "Shall the thing formed," continues the apostle, "say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one

vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" ver. 20, 21. The substance of this answer is as follows, Has the rejected nation of the Jews any right to find fault with the adoption of the Gentiles, any more than the punished nation of the Egyptians had with the preserved nation of the Israelites? That the illustration, which the apostle here uses, does not refer to the salvation of individuals, but to the divine mode of regulating the general dispensations of providence and grace, is obvious, both from the context, and the use of the same illustration in the prophet Jeremiah. The passage in Jeremiah reads thus—
"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jer. xviii. 6—10. Adopting the apostle's illustration, we may consider his meaning to be thus exhibited; the Jewish nation, which has hitherto been the highly favoured people of God, being in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter, may, by the sovereign pleasure of God, be justly

deprived of its peculiar privileges, and be ranked on the same footing with other nations, which were not formerly the people of God.

The apostle, still keeping in view the sovereignty of God, and also his equity, as displayed in the preceding illustration, adds, "What if God, willing," as in the future destruction of Jerusalem, "to shew his wrath, and to make his power known," as he did on Pharaoh and his army, "endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that," as in the case of the ancient Israelites, "he might," according to the constituted principles of the gospel dispensation, "make known," in the day of Jesus Christ, "the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy, which he had afore," even in this world, by the sanctification of his Spirit, "prepared unto glory: even us, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles whom he hath called," or endowed with the privileges of the Christian calling?

Having thus introduced the Christian calling as being enjoyed, on the same grounds, by Jews and Gentiles, the apostle confirms his statement by appealing to the prophets, (acknowledged authorities with the Jews,) who shew, that, in the latter days, both Jews and Gentiles should be partakers of the salvation of God. The apostle first quotes, in regard to the Gentiles, from Hosea, (chap. ii. 23. and i. 10.) thus, "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass,

that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the *children* of the living God," ver. 25, 26. Secondly, in regard to the Jews, he quotes from Isaiah, (chap. x. 22, 23. xxviii. 22. i. 9.) thus, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha," ver. 27—29.

The apostle having concluded his digression, returns to the thought from which he set out, (ver. 6.) viz. that his sorrow for his countrymen was "not as though the word of God had taken none effect," and continues, by putting the question, (ver. 30.) "What shall we say then?" His answer, in the affirmative, is, "that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." ver. 31. In reference to the case of the cast-off Israelites, the apostle puts a question, and gives an answer:—"Wherefore? Because they sought it not by *faith*, but as it were by the *works of the law*," ver. 32. The apostle next assigns the reason why they did not seek it by faith. Justification by faith, although

“witnessed by the law and the prophets,” was so repulsive to the bigoted and self-righteous views of the Jewish people, that, to use the apostle’s language, “they stumbled” at the doctrine of faith in Jesus Christ.—“As it is written, (Is. viii. 14. xxviii. 16.) Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever *believeth* on him shall not be ashamed,” ver. 33.

It now lies with the reader to determine, whether or not the chapter that has been under review, sanctions the doctrine which maintains, that the sovereignty of God is exercised in limiting the number of those who shall be eternally saved.

6th, Rom. xi. 33, 35, 36. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” It is admitted, that, in this passage, mention is made of the infinite wisdom and sovereign goodness of God. It is then to be determined whether these attributes are here exhibited, as displayed in the eternal election of individuals to faith and salvation. Now the apostle’s reflections are evidently drawn from the various declarations and reasonings which are found in the preceding part of the chapter. On turning to the nineteenth verse, we find the

apostle representing the believing Gentile as saying, "The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in." To this remark the apostle replies,— "Well, because of *unbelief* they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear; for if God spared not the *natural* branches, take heed lest he spare not *thee*. Behold, therefore, the *goodness* and *severity* of God: on them which *fell, severity*; but toward *thee, goodness*, if thou *continue* in his goodness: otherwise *thou also* shalt be cut off." The apostle goes on to shew (ver. 23—29) that nothing but unbelief prevented the unbelieving Jews from being grafted in again; and (ver. 30—32) that God, by the new dispensation, had "concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," (both Jews and Gentiles,) on their believing in Jesus Christ. In immediate connexion follows the apostle's theme of admiration—"O the depth of the riches, &c."

7th, 1 Pet. ii. 9. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (ver. 10.) which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." It is admitted that the subject of the apostle's declaration is a manifestation of the sovereign mercy and goodness of God. But the question is, Does the subject of the apostle's declaration relate to an

eternal election of certain individuals to faith and salvation? If we regard the force of terms, it will appear, that the apostle spoke of the state of those whom he addressed as a *body* of believers, for he calls them a generation, priesthood, nation, a people. Further, in the tenth verse, he says that once they were not the *people of God*, and once, as a people, had not obtained mercy. In short, the apostle does not state any *truth* concerning individual election, but a *fact* concerning the general state of believing Gentiles. The apostle Paul, in addressing the Ephesian church, seems to refer to the same fact of a sovereign separation of the believing Gentiles to be God's peculiar people, in connexion with believers from among the Jews, who were his ancient people. "Wherefore, remember that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that *at that time* ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, but *now* in Christ Jesus, ye who *sometimes* were *far off*, are made *nigh* by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jews and Gentiles) "one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition," chap. ii. 11—14.

II. "From all eternity, foreknow, and forechose to everlasting salvation, and all the benefits thereof."

1st, Rom viii. 29, 30. "For whom he did fore-

know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." In order to examine the validity of our author's argument, as grounded on this passage of scripture, we must analyze the proposition of which the words at the head of this article form a part. "God, from all eternity, foreknew, and forechose to everlasting salvation, and all the benefits thereof, some particular persons of mankind, whom he pleased, as permitted, or to be permitted, to fall into sin and misery, from which they could not recover themselves." We have here two divine acts—*foreknowing*, and *forechoosing* to everlasting salvation; and the *objects* of these acts,—*some particular persons of mankind as sinners*. Let us first contrast the *objects* as here defined with those as described by the apostle in the passage before us. The apostle's words are—"For *whom* he did foreknow." Now as the word *for* is connective, we must trace the objects to the preceding context—"And we know that all things work together for good to *them that love God, to them who are the called* according to his purpose." Here then we have the apostle's description of the persons who were foreknown and predestinated;—they were those that *love* God,—those who are *initiated into the Christian calling*, which calling was instituted according to an

eternal purpose. Now the objects whom our author describes, are some particular persons of mankind as lying in a state of sin and misery; that is, sinners *as such*; while the apostle describes the objects of the divine foreknowing and predestinating *as believers*, reconciled unto God by the death of his Son.

We come, in the next place, to discover the nature of the divine acts of *foreknowing* and *predestinating*, agreeably to the apostle's use of the words in this place. 1st, From what has already been advanced, we find, that the persons said to be foreknown by God, were such as already enjoyed the favour of God, and were exercising love towards him. It follows, therefore, that as all men are the objects of God's foreknowledge, these persons must have been foreknown with the divine affection of compassion or complacency. Now as they had ceased to be guilty sinners, and had been instated into the favour of God, it is reasonable to believe, that the affection with which God foreknew them, was the affection of complacency. 2nd, It is too obvious to need demonstration, that the act of predestinating mentioned by the apostle, was not, according to our author's view, "to eternal salvation and all the benefits thereof," but "to be conformed to the image of God's Son." It therefore follows, that the apostle and our author differ as to the nature of the *divine act* of predestinating, recorded in this passage; and as to the *object* of that predestinating, the apostle intimates, that God's *adopted* people were predestinated to be

conformed to the image of his Son, so that his Son might be the first-born among many *brethren*.

It now remains for us to discover what the apostle intends, in this place, by conformity to the image of God's Son; for the phrase sometimes denotes likeness to Christ—in moral excellence, in his suffering, in his death, in his resurrection, and in his glorified state. In order to know which of these is meant by the apostle, we must strive to find out the scope of his reasoning. To discover this, it will be proper to go as far back as the commencement of the chapter. 1st, The apostle assures us that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," that is, who are genuine believers in Christ, ver. 1. 2d, Of such persons he gives a summary description—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," ver. 1. 3d, To substantiate this description he enters into a course of reasoning, ver. 2—11. 4th, After proving his point, he enjoins the duty of preserving that character, in order that they might inherit eternal life, ver. 12, 13. 5th, In support of their right to the privilege of eternal life to which he alluded, he declares that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons of God*," ver. 14. 6th, In attestation of their sonship, he appeals to their experience,—“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*.” ver. 15. 7th, He next grounds the believer's consciousness of his adoption on the testimony of the

Spirit of God.—“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the *children of God*,” ver. 16. 8th, He then draws an inference from the doctrine just stated—“and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” ver. 17. 9th, As there is a natural connexion between the state of children and right to the inheritance, so the apostle assures us, that there is a constituted connexion between *a state of suffering* and *the glorified state* enjoyed through the *right* to the heavenly inheritance:—“if so be, that we *suffer* with him, that we may be also *glorified* together,” ver. 17. The same truth is stated by the apostle Peter also—“For hereunto (a state of suffering) were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps.” 1 Pet. ii. 21.

The connexion of the state of suffering to which Christians are called, with the state of glory to which they shall be raised, forms the ground-work of the apostle’s reasoning in the subsequent part of this chapter. As the previous state of suffering is painful, and the subsequent state of glory joyful, it was natural for the apostle to draw a contrast between the unhappiness of the former, and the felicity of the latter. This he does in the following words—“For I reckon that the *sufferings* of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us,” ver. 18. So great is the glory to be revealed in the saints, that, says the apostle, “the *earnest* expectation of the creature

waiteth for the *manifestation* of the sons of God," ver. 19. Passing over the parenthetical matter contained in the three subsequent verses, we come to another proof of the greatness and desirableness of that glory which is to be revealed in the sons of God : "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves *groan* within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," ver. 23. Having represented believers as *waiting* for the adoption, the apostle subjoins the following remark : "For we are saved by *hope*," v. 24.

After speaking of the nature of christian hope, he leads the attention of his readers to a consideration of the other view of the subject, by shewing that although the sufferings of the Christian are small compared with the glory that shall be revealed in him, they are smaller still when it is considered that he has not only the support of hope, but the aids of God's holy Spirit—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," ver. 26, 27. In addition to the consideration of the exceeding greatness of the future glory on the one hand, and the diminutiveness of the sufferings on the other, the apostle adduces the circumstance, that all painful and afflictive circumstances are working,

under the direction of God, for the real advantage of those who are exercised by them—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," ver. 28. And it is evident what is the reason that all things work together for good to the accepted and highly privileged people of God; "For," says he, "whom he did foreknow [with the love of complacency] he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" in sufferings, ver. 29.

That this image consisted in likeness to Christ as it regards a state of suffering, is obvious from the seventeenth verse, where it is said, "if so be that we *suffer with him.*" Now the end which the apostle assigns for this act of predestination, is, that Christ "might be the *first-born* among many brethren." The term first-born or first-begotten usually denotes pre-eminence over others, who, in a certain sense, may be considered as compeers. Thus Jesus Christ is declared to be the first-born of every creature, as being superior to all the rational creation, (of which his human soul formed a part,) by reason of his being, as it respects his divine nature, "the image of the invisible God," Col. i. 15. He is also declared to be the first-born from the dead, "that," as the apostle adds, "in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Ibid. ver. 18. The apostle Paul teaches us in another place, that Jesus Christ, as a son, has pre-eminence over his adopted brethren, because of his sufferings—"Though he was a son, yet learned he

obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the *author* of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him." "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many *sons* unto glory, to make the *captain* of their salvation perfect through *sufferings*," Heb. iv. 8, 9. ii. 10. Returning again to that with which he set out in the seventeenth verse, viz. the connexion between *sufferings* and *glory*, the apostle sums up his observations, by saying, "Moreover, whom he did predestinate [to be conformed to the image of Christ in *sufferings*] them he also called, [or instates into the Christian calling;] and whom he called, them he also justified [or honours by conferring the blessing of pardon;] and whom he justified, them he also *glorified*," [that is, finally honours with the enjoyment of eternal glory as being heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ] ver. 30. Thus the apostle shews, that the predestined *state of sufferings* with Christ, is previous and indispensable to the subsequent *state of glory* with him.

On reviewing the purposes and dispensations of God in reference to believers in Jesus Christ, (ver. 31.) the apostle exhibits, in the form of interrogatories, the various immunities of God's people. 1st, Concerning exemption from successful opposition—"If God is for us, who can be against us?" 2d, Concerning exemption from want—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us *all* things?"

3rd, Concerning exemption from the condemnatory charges of enemies—"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." 4th, Concerning exemption from any alienating influence in reference to Christ's gracious regard—"Who shall *separate* us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" In addition to the ground of confidence and patience which the apostle lays in the *appointed state* of conformity to Christ in sufferings, he draws additional support from the page of prophecy: "As it is written, (Ps. xlv. 22.) For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Such, however, is the love and power of Jesus Christ, that a most signal deliverance from all the evils incident to the state of conformity to Christ, shall be effected in behalf of all those who love God. "Nay," says the apostle, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to *separate* us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2nd, Rom. v. 8. "But God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for

us." The question to be solved here is, who are meant by *us*? Certain particular persons of mankind? or sinners in general? In a preceding verse the apostle says, "while we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*," ver. 6.

3rd, Rom. ix. 13. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It has already been shewn, that this passage refers exclusively to the temporal circumstances of the Israelites and Edomites. But supposing that it refers to the spiritual state of Jacob and Esau, our author's view of *sovereign* election of the one, and *judicial* rejection of the other, would not stand; for it is said of them, "The children being not yet born, neither having done any *good or evil*," &c. ver. 11. Now, unless our author had been prepared to reject the doctrine of *judicial* reprobation, and adopt that of *sovereign* reprobation, the doctrine of sovereign election to eternal life could not be founded on this passage; for the election of Jacob is no more sovereign than is the rejection of Esau: and our author admits, as will appear in a subsequent page, that the reprobated are predestinated to eternal destruction *for their sins*.

4th, John iii. 16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This passage, we presume, is not cited to prove the eternal election of certain individuals, but the end for which the elect are forechosen, viz. "everlasting salvation."

5th, 1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

The persons here designated the *elect*, were "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," verse 1. The same persons are afterwards designated "a *chosen* generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," chap. ii. 9. Now we know, that they were not a *chosen* generation until they believed in Jesus Christ, and were instated in the Christian calling; for, before that time, they were not the people of God, and had not obtained mercy, ver. 10. Hence we infer, that their being designated a *chosen* generation, or strangers *elect*, was owing to their being separated from the ignorance and wickedness in which they formerly lived, through the divinely constituted dispensation of the gospel, and by the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. Our opinion is confirmed by what follows; "That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath *called* you out of *darkness* into his marvellous *light*." Agreeable to this view is the exposition which the first and second verses of the first chapter force upon us. Those strangers were elect, according to the foreknowledge or appointment of God; it being God's purpose from the foundation of the world, that the believing Gentiles should rank among his chosen ones. The apostle further adds, "*through* sanctification of the Spirit;"

it being the work of the Spirit to constitute them "a *holy* nation." Hence it follows, that the foreknowledge of God, as mentioned in this passage, has a reference to the privileged state of the church of Christ, and not to the limitation of the number of its members.

6th, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Among other instructions, the apostle exhorts his son Timothy (i. 13.) to be steadfast in the faith, and to instruct others, in order that they should also become teachers, so that the truth as it is in Jesus might abound and prevail, ii. 2. The doctrine which the apostle most particularly presses upon the attention of Timothy, is that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, *was raised from the dead*, according to my gospel," ver. 8. Having mentioned the persecution which he was suffering on account of the gospel of Christ, (ver. 9.) he states his readiness to endure all the evils that may happen unto him, that the elect might "also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," ver. 10. Now, as the salvation of which he had been speaking includes the resurrection of the body, he adds, "It is a faithful saying; For if we be *dead* with him, we shall also *live* with him," ver. 11. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body necessarily brings after it the

doctrine of future glory. "If we *suffer*, we shall also *reign* with him," ver. 12. And as it is possible that men might shrink from participating with Christ in his sufferings, the apostle adds, "If we *deny* him, he also will *deny* us," ver. 12. Now, lest any should object to this mode of procedure on the part of Jesus Christ, and call in question his faithfulness, he adds, "If we *believe not*, yet he abideth *faithful*: he cannot *deny himself*," ver. 13. After urging Timothy (ver. 14, 15.) to put the brethren in mind of these things, he exhorts him to shun profane and vain babblings, ver. 16. One fruit of such things he assigns to be, that "their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." These persons had set themselves up in opposition to the apostles, and seem to have taught, among other heresies, that the resurrection promised to believers in Jesus Christ, was a *spiritual* one; and as such a resurrection had already taken place in true believers, they were led to say, that the resurrection was *past*.

It appears that, by the craftiness of these false teachers, the faith of some, as the apostle says, had been overthrown, and consequently the foundation of their hope had become insecure. The apostle however observes, that notwithstanding the foundation of some had been found insecure, the foundation of God, in reference to the reality of the resurrection, and the

validity of the mission of his divinely-constituted ambassadors, stands secure from the possibility of being shaken.—“Nevertheless,” says he, “the foundation of God standeth sure.” The apostle, alluding to the opposition which Moses and Aaron met in the rebellious conduct of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, quotes the language of Moses as used on the occasion. At the first interview with Korah and his company, Moses said to them, “Even to-morrow *the Lord will shew who are his*; and will cause to come near unto him,” Num. xvi. 5. This shewing who were God’s, was to act as the seal of Moses’ authority. But the seal was also to have a regard to the people; therefore Moses was commanded to speak unto the congregation, saying, “*Depart*, I pray you, from the tents of these *wicked* men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in their sins,” ver. 26. Now, as the apostle’s words in the original correspond with the Septuagint, which is a translation of the original Hebrew, the import of the apostle’s words may very justly be considered as corresponding with the English translation of what Moses is recorded in the book of Numbers to have said, viz. “The Lord will shew who are his.” This manifestation, then, would appear to refer to the apostles, evangelists, and other divinely-qualified teachers of the primitive church, who, in contradistinction to the heretical teachers, should, in due time, be acknowledged by God as his faithful servants. The apostle’s exhortation also very much

resembles that of Moses.—“*Depart* from the tents of these *wicked* men,” said Moses.—“Let every one that nameth the name of Christ *depart* from *iniquity*,” says the apostle. The apostle had said (ver. 16,) that the profane and vain babblings of such as Hymeneus and Philetus would increase unto more *ungodliness*. Thus their lives, it would seem, resembled those of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; consequently the apostle’s injunction to depart from *iniquity*, is synonymous with that of Moses—Depart from the *tents* of these *wicked* men.

The import, then, of the verse under examination seems to be thus—that God had set a seal to the foundation of his truth; which seal will testify in due time who are the appointed guardians and teachers of that truth, and also demands of all who sincerely desire to walk by the truth, that they depart from iniquity, the usual companion of dangerous errors.

7th, 1 John iv. 9, 10, 19. See the remark at No. 4.

III. “Some particular persons of mankind, whom he pleased, and but the smaller number, and as permitted, or to be permitted, to fall into sin and misery from which they could not recover themselves.”—

1st, Matth. xx. 16. “Many be called, but few chosen.” For an exposition of this passage see a former page. The design of our author in quoting this passage in this place seems to be, to prove that the number of the saved is smaller than the number of the lost. It is to be lamented that there is reason to think, that, hitherto, this remark is too true. But

it is not quite evident that our Lord designed these words to be applicable in every age of the church; for they seem to have a particular reference to the state of the Jews in the days of our Lord.

2d, Matth. xxii. 14. "For many are called, but few are chosen." See above. It is worthy of remark, however, that the being called is always represented as preceding the being chosen.

3d, Luke xii. 32. "Fear not, little flock." Our Lord spoke these words to his disciples, as distinguished from the surrounding multitude, who had come to see and hear. It does not therefore follow, that, at the last day, or even in every age of the church, Christ's flock is a small one.

4th, 2 Tim. ii. 19. See above.

5th, John x. 26. "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." These words contain either *instruction* or *reproof*. Our author's view exhibits them as containing instruction. That instruction was, that the persons whom Jesus was addressing had not been given to him from eternity. The context, however, evidently requires them to be considered as a reproof. Now we know, that the Jews were frequently reprov'd by our Lord for their indocile and obstinate disposition: thus: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," chap. v. 40. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not." ver. 42. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?" ver. 44.

“For had ye believed *Moses*, ye would have believed *me*: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” ver. 46, 47. “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God,” viii. 42. “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my words,” ver. 43. “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye, therefore, hear them not, *because* ye are not of God,” ver. 47. “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice,” xviii. 37. Hence it follows that the expressions—to be of the truth—to be of God—to be of Christ’s sheep, as applied to the Jews, seem to be synonymous.

6th, John xiii. 18. “I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” The question to be decided is, whether the choosing, here mentioned, took place in time or in eternity; also, whether it regarded the salvation of the apostles, or their apostolical office. The context seems to afford us no assistance in discovering the precise meaning of the choosing of the *eleven* apostles. We know that in one sense the twelve were chosen. “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he *chose twelve*, whom also he named apostles,” Luke vi. 13. Now it is obvious, this cannot be the choosing adverted to in the passage under consideration. Again, we find Jesus making use of the same word after Judas had been excluded from the number.—“Ye

have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you." xv. 16. It is quite evident, that, had the choosing in this place regarded an eternal election to salvation, there would have been no occasion to say—"Ye have not chosen *me*;" for, in our author's sense, that was impossible. Further, the subsequent words seem to restrict the choosing to the apostolical office—"and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." Again, the use of the word in a subsequent verse seems to limit its meaning as an act done in *time*. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you *out of the world*, therefore the world hateth you," chap. xv. 19.

7th, John xvii. 6, 12. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition." It is evident from the context, that the apostles were the persons here spoken of. The *giving* could not be an eternal gift, for they were given *out of the world*. The circumstance that Judas was given to Christ, is sufficient proof that the whole passage refers to the state of discipleship. Lastly, it is worthy of remark that our

evangelist, in a subsequent chapter, (xviii. 8, 9.) applies the words, "those that thou gavest me, I have kept," &c. to the temporal care which Jesus Christ exercised over his more immediate followers. "If therefore," said Jesus, "ye seek me, let *these* go their way." The evangelist adds, "That the saying (that at present under consideration) might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none."

8th, John xv. 19. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." We have here, 1st, The character of our Lord's apostles—they were not of the world. 2nd, The consequence of their separation from the world—the world, instead of loving, hated them. 3rd, The cause of their separation from the world—Christ's call, instructions, and protection. In a manner somewhat similar are all true Christians, in every age, chosen out of the world. This is done by the Holy Spirit, Christ's substitute on earth. It lies now with the reader to decide, whether or not the election of the apostles out of the world was an eternal act, and whether or not the peculiarity of the apostolical election can be any ground of argument for the election of Christians in general.

9th, Rom. viii. 29. ix. 16, 18. v. 8, 10. See above.

IV. "And pre-appointed them to salvation, unto conformity with Christ, and to an adoption into his family, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with him."

1st, 2 Thes. ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."—As the same subject, and the same mode of expression, are introduced in the first Epistle, it will be proper to contrast the two Epistles. Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus, (who are all concerned in the writing of both Epistles,) express themselves thus in the first Epistle, "We give thanks to God for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election. For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also with power, and with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance," ver. 2—5. Let us now run a parallel between this passage and that under consideration. 1st, The thanksgiving—"We give thanks to God always for you all:" "But we are bound to give thanks to God for you." 2nd, The privilege of the Thessalonians—"Brethren, beloved of God:" "Brethren, beloved of the Lord." 3rd, Their state—"Knowing your election:" "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." 4th, The means of their election—"For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also with power, and with the *Holy Ghost*, and much *assurance*:" "Chosen you through *sanctification of the Spirit*, and *belief of the truth*."

In the second Epistle, Paul and his associates express themselves concerning the Thessalonian church in pretty much the same manner as they do in the first. "We are bound," say they, "to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your *faith* groweth exceedingly, and the *charity* of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your *patience* and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure," ver. 3, 4. Here we have mention made of the continued exercise of the work of *faith*, the labour of *love*, and patience of *hope*; for which graces they had been honourably noticed in the first Epistle. The agreement is still further evident. In the first Epistle it is said, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, [as it regards a state of suffering,] having received the word in *much affliction*, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were *ensamples* to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from *you* sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in *every place* your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that *we* need not to speak any thing," chap. i. 6—8. In the second Epistle it is added, "So that *we* ourselves *glory* in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure," chap. i. 4. For an account of the rise of these persecutions, see Acts xvii. 5—9. In reference to these persecutions, the apostle takes up the remainder of

the chapter in administering consolation, in doing which, he assures them of the happiness and glory that await all true believers. He then warns them (ii. 1, 2.) against believing a report which had been raised concerning the second coming of Christ, assuring them that that should not come, "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," ver. 3. Having foretold the destruction of that wicked one, (ver. 4—8.) he says, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for *you*, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen *you* to salvation," &c. ver. 9—13. Now, it is quite evident that the apostle here contrasts the state of the Thessalonian church with that of those who had become the victims of delusion, and would soon become the subjects of destruction. On account of the state of the former, he declares, that he was bound to give thanks. The same he had said in the first chapter, in reference to their faith, love, and patience, under grievous afflictions; and in the first Epistle he says, "We give thanks to God always for you;" "remem-

bering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." Thus we see that in the three passages the apostle alludes to the same privileged state in which the Thessalonians stood before God.

Having already run a parallel between the descriptions given of their state in the first and second Epistles, (chap. i. 3—5. ii. 13.) let us examine the contrast which the apostle draws between their state, and that of those who perished, as quoted above, 2 ep. ii. 9—13. 1st, The Thessalonians were ranked as "*brethren*," and the others as aliens, for they "had pleasure in *unrighteousness*." 2nd, The former were "*beloved of the Lord*," and the latter were treated as enemies, because of their rejection of the gospel, and persevering wickedness. 3rd, God *chose* the former to *salvation*, and the latter he appointed to damnation; for he sent "them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be *damned*." 4th, The election of the former was effected "through sanctification of the Spirit" on the part of God, and by "*belief of the truth*" on their own part; and the reprobation of the latter, through the sending of a *strong delusion* on the part of God, and by *not receiving the love of the truth* on their own part. 5th, The time when the election of the former was effected, was "*from the beginning*," that is, at the time when the apostle and his associates began the preaching of the gospel among them: and the reprobation of the latter was effected, when, after

the gospel had been preached to them, "they *received not* the love of the truth, that they might be saved." The phrase, *from the beginning*, is sometimes used in Scripture to denote the commencement of a period, which, although not expressed, is understood from the connexion. This will appear from the following passages. "Even as they delivered them unto us, which *from the beginning* were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." Luke i. 2. "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew *from the beginning* who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." John vi. 64. "And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you *from the beginning*." Chap. viii. 25. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us *at the beginning*." Acts xi. 15. "For this is the message that ye heard *from the beginning*, that we should love one another." 1 John iii. 11. It is evident from inspection, that the first three examples limit the phrase to the commencement of Christ's ministry; that the fourth limits it to the day of Pentecost; and that the fifth limits it to the commencement of the preaching of the gospel among those whom John addressed. The last example obviously corresponds with the meaning which has naturally followed from an attentive consideration of the passage under review. Although the above-quoted examples afford only presumptive proof that the phrase, *from the beginning*, is similarly used in the passage under examination, there is positive proof that the period to which,

in limiting the phrase, our reasoning has led us, was actually called, by the apostle himself, *the beginning of the gospel*. In acknowledging the liberality of the Philippian church, he says, "Now ye Philippians, know also, that *in the beginning of the gospel*, when I departed from Macedonia, (the capital of which was Thessalonica,) no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only." Philip. iv. 15. Hence it follows, that if the Thessalonians were chosen to salvation through *sanctification* of the Spirit, and *belief* of the truth; and if they were brought under the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and received the love of the truth, at the time when the apostle laboured among them, being the beginning of the gospel in those parts; it follows, that they were chosen to salvation from the beginning, that is, *the beginning of the gospel*. With this view agrees our exposition of 1 Pet. i. 2. "*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit*, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

2nd, 1 Thess. v. 9. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." At the second verse, the apostle gives the Thessalonians warning concerning the second coming of our Lord, "For you yourselves know that the day of the Lord so cometh *as a thief in the night*:" keeping up the figure, he continues thus, "But ye, brethren, are not in *darkness*, that that day should overtake you as a *thief*. Ye are

all the children of the *light*, and the children of the *day*," ver. 4. 5. Including himself and all other believers, he reiterates the same truth: "We are not of the *night* nor of *darkness*," ver. 5. On this truth he grounds the duty of *watchfulness*. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us *watch* and be *sober*. For they that *sleep*, sleep in the *night*; and they that be *drunken*, are drunken in the *night*. But let us, who are of the *day*, be *sober*, putting on the breast-plate of *faith* and *love*; and for an helmet, the *hope* of salvation," ver. 6—8. He next proceeds, by the way of encouragement, to state the *ground* of the Christian's hope of *salvation*—"For," says he, "God hath not appointed us (*believers*) to wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether, [in a natural sense] we wake or sleep, we should [in a spiritual sense] live together with him," ver. 9, 10. It is obvious, that this truth, which the apostle lays as the ground of the believer's hope, is a mere echo of what is announced elsewhere (John iii. 16, 17)—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have *everlasting life*. For God sent not his Son into the world to *condemn* the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Again, supposing, with our author, that this passage proves, inferentially, that "God hath from all eternity appointed some particular persons of mankind to salvation," then the revelation of this fact

must be the ground of the Christian's hope; but it cannot be a *safe* ground, unless to each individual it be revealed that he himself is appointed to salvation; now if there is no proof that this is what the apostle intended as the ground of hope, then our author's view cannot be founded on this passage.

3rd, Rom. viii. 17, 29. Eph. i. 5. Consult the expositions elsewhere.

V. "And without regarding any foreseen qualities in them whether natural or moral, as his motive, hath, of his own mere will and sovereign grace, and good pleasure."—Had our author said that "God hath from eternity chosen all believers in Jesus Christ, without regarding any foreseen qualities, &c. the case would have been essentially different.

1st, Matth. xi. 15, 26. See above.

2nd, 1 Cor. i. 25—26. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; (ver. 29.) that no flesh should glory in his presence."

At the tenth verse, the apostle commences an exhortation concerning the duty of Christian unanimity in an ecclesiastical capacity: and the degree of importance which he attached to the due performance of that duty, may be inferred from this circum-

stance, that he makes it the subject of elucidation and enforcement throughout the first four chapters. In the next verse, we are informed, that he learned from good authority, that there was great occasion for such an exhortation. Contentions, which seem to have ended in schisms, originated in the regard which certain individuals had for the character and labours of their favourite teachers; one saying, "I am of Paul;" another, "I of Apollos;" a third, "I of Cephas;" (ver. 12.) and a fourth, perhaps with as little discernment, "I am of Christ." To the schismatic tendency of drawing contrasts among the ministers of the word of life, the apostle gives at once a death-blow. This he does by putting the following questions; "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" ver. 13. The negative of these questions sufficiently proves that none can share with Jesus Christ in the glory of human redemption. The evidence which is assigned for the truth of this position, arises from the work which Jesus Christ performed, and the enjoined profession of faith in his name, as made by all his followers.

As it was quite evident that Paul had not been crucified for the Corinthians, any remark on this part of the subject would have been superfluous; but as it was possible that some might think he had initiated disciples into faith in himself, by means of the rite of baptism, he goes on to shew (ver. 14—16.) what was the extent of his labours in administering that rite;

and next assigns his reason for not baptizing more, which was, that Christ sent him "not *to baptize*, but *to preach the gospel*." ver. 17.

Now, as the *manner* of preaching the gospel might be turned into a means of forming schismatic parties, the apostle wishes it to be understood, that, even in the fulfilment of his proper office, he had no regard to the esteem or veneration of a party; intimating, that he did not preach the gospel "with the wisdom of words;" otherwise, as he infers, the doctrine of salvation by the cross of Christ might have been either excluded from the usual topics of his discourse, or so neutralized as to produce no beneficial effects, ver. 17. That the doctrine of the cross of Christ did not give opportunity for a display of human wisdom, or heathen philosophy, the apostle avers from this consideration, that "the preaching of the cross of Christ is to them that perish *foolishness*; but to them that are saved it is the power of God," ver. 18. He then shews, by sundry quotations from Isaiah, that this result was contemplated in the purposes of the Divine Mind, (ver. 19, 20.) and adds, "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the *Jews* require a *sign*, and the *Greeks* seek after *wisdom*: but we preach Christ *crucified*," ver. 21—23. In accounting for the disposition of the Jews to require a sign, and the Greeks to seek after wisdom, we have to remark, that the former superstitiously adhered to the peculiar proofs

which God afforded to the mission of Moses, and shewed, even in our Lord's day, a strong disinclination against the evidence arising from the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles; and that the latter, having attained a higher state of excellence in the arts and sciences than other contemporary nations, expected marks of superior wisdom to be exhibited in a religion which laid claim to their serious attention and cordial reception. So far, however, was the required sign from being granted to the former, that a strong prejudice, founded on a denunciation of the Mosaic law, (Gal. iii. 13.) was confronted by a fundamental fact of the gospel, namely, the crucifixion of Christ; for, as the apostle informs us, the preaching of Christ crucified became "to the Jews a *stumbling-block*." In like manner, the latter could see no proof of what they termed wisdom in the doctrine of Christ crucified, which, according to the apostle, was "unto the Greeks *foolishness*." But the apostle assures us, (ver. 24.) that the preaching of Christ crucified was "unto them who were the called, both Jews and Gentiles, the power of God, and the wisdom of God;" that is, the power of God to the believing Jews, and the wisdom of God to the believing Gentiles. The apostle then adds, by the way of conclusion, "Because (or therefore) the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." That is, the foolishness of God, as it appears to the unbelieving Gentile, is, in fact, wiser than the boasted wisdom of the

Gentile world; and the weakness of God, as it appears to the unbelieving Jew, is stronger than the fancied strength of evidence desired by the unbelieving Jews.

Having thus exhibited the aspect in which the Christian dispensation appeared to the prejudiced Jew and Gentile, he proceeds to apply the subject to the schismatic state of the Corinthian church. "For ye see your *calling*, brethren, how that not many *wise* men after the flesh, not many *mighty*, not many *noble*, (are called to the ministry;) but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world," &c. The design of this peculiarity of the gospel-calling was to prevent men themselves, or others, from glorying in their adventitious excellencies—"that no flesh," says the apostle, "should glory in his presence." On the contrary, all true Christians possess in Jesus Christ, the *wisdom* of which they may boast, and also *power*, as it is displayed in the effecting of righteousness, or *justification*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*. For, says the apostle, "Of him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God *is made unto us* wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Further, as if he tacitly allowed that he himself ranked among the excepted number of wise men, Paul assures the Corinthians, that, in communicating to them the gospel of Jesus Christ, he did not avail himself of his knowledge of heathen philosophy.—

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with *excellency of speech* or of *wisdom*, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save *Jesus Christ*, and him *crucified*,” chap. ii. 1, 2.

3rd, Rom. ix. 11, 16, 18. Eph. i. 4, 5. See above.

4th, 2 Tim. i. 9. “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” We have here, 1st, *The Christian calling*—“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.” 2nd, *The subjects* of that calling—“us,” including both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ. 3rd, *The origin* of that calling—“Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.” 4th, *The medium*—“Which was given us in Christ Jesus.” 5th, *The period* when the calling was designed—“Before the world began.” Having mentioned the period when the divine purpose was formed for instituting the Christian dispensation, he tacitly admits what he elsewhere (Eph. iii. 5.) expresses, that the purpose “was not *in other ages* made known unto the sons of men,” and declares that it “is *now* made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ,” (ver. 10.) and, consequently, “is *now* revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,” Eph. iii. 5. He next goes on to shew, (ver. 11.) as he does at Eph. iii. 7. that he was, agreeably to this purpose, “appointed a

minister, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

VI. "From eternity."

1st, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—We learn from the context, that the persons to whom the foregoing invitation will be given are *the righteous*. We also learn from the passage itself, that the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world, not for particular persons of mankind as *sinners*, but for such as were *righteous*. The subsequent context further confirms this distinction—"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," &c.

2nd, Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. See above.

3rd, Rev. xiii. 8. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—Our author, agreeably to the phraseology used, chap. xvii. 8. has connected the phrase—"from the foundation of the world," with the term—"the book of life," in the following manner, "whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world." Admitting this transposition, we observe, that as all things are known to God from eternity, and, consequently, as there exists, according to figurative language, a book of life, the names of those that shall be saved must have been written in that book from the foundation

of the world. It deserves, however, to be remarked, that it is also written, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not *blot out* his name out of the book of life," chap. iii. 5. Also, "And if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall *take away* his part *out of the book of life*," chap. xxii. 19.

4th, Titus i. 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."—The next verse plainly limits the foregoing to the general promises of the gospel by Jesus Christ—"But hath in due times *manifested* his word through *preaching*, which is committed to me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

VII. "Chose them in Christ, as their head; and unalterably ordained and appointed them to obtain their everlasting life in and through him."

1st, Rom. ix. 11, 18, 23. 2 Tim. 1, 9. See above.

2nd, Acts xiii. 48. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."—A learned divine, whose authority in the religious world is perhaps more general than that of any other writer, gives the following translation of the passage;—"And as many as were determined for eternal life believed."—In justification of this author's translation, let it suffice to say, that he believed in the doctrine of personal election to faith and salvation; and consequently, it may justly be inferred, that the translation was not made according to the bias of a creed. At the 14th verse of this chapter we are informed, that Paul and

his associates "came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down." The historian goes on to say, that, "after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and, beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience," ver. 15, 16.

In the discourse which followed, the apostle calls the attention of his hearers to some of the Scripture proofs for the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. But not content with simply declaring the truth concerning the character of Jesus Christ, he presses them to accept the benefits resulting from his mediation, saying.—"Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to *you* is the word of salvation sent," ver. 26. Returning to his remarks on the character of Jesus Christ, he informs them, that their countrymen in Jerusalem had put Jesus Christ to death, according to ancient prophecy; and that God had raised him from the dead, agreeably to the promise which had been made to their fathers, ver. 27—37. He again obeys the impulse of Christian love, and offers to them afresh the blessings of salvation.—"Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified

from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, ver. 38, 39.

Having thus blighted their vain hopes of justification by the law of Moses, and anticipating the effect of his doctrine in the minds of his Jewish hearers, he solemnly warns them to beware of a certain awful threatening, ver. 40, 41. After the Jews had retired from the synagogue, such of the Gentiles as had been present, "besought that these words might be preached to them next sabbath," ver. 42. "On the next sabbath-day," therefore, "came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God," ver. 44. We may rationally conclude, that the greater part of this multitude came through curiosity, and not from a sincere desire to obtain eternal life, as did those who had besought the same things to be declared to them again. The Jews, seeing so great a multitude assembled in their synagogue, and being filled with bigotry and jealousy, "spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming," ver. 45. We are then informed, that "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to *you*; but seeing ye put it away from you, and judge yourselves *unworthy of everlasting life*, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for so hath the Lord *commanded* us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the *ends* of the earth," ver. 46, 47. We may well conceive what were the

feelings of those Gentiles, at whose request the apostles addressed the assembly, when they heard the soul-inspiring words of the apostle—"lo, we turn to the *Gentiles*." Accordingly, the historian informs, us that "when the Gentiles (meaning those who had been present on the preceding sabbath) heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord," ver. 48. As we have limited the number of those who "were glad, and who glorified the word of the Lord," to such of the Gentiles as were present on the preceding sabbath, and were desirous of hearing the words of eternal life which the Jews had rejected; so, agreeably to this, the historian informs us, that all such believed:—"as many as were determined for eternal life believed."

Again, the meaning which our author attaches to this passage, is evidently liable to several objections. 1st, The most approved method of finding the meaning of Scripture, viz. by tracing the connexion, is entirely discarded. 2nd, Our author's application of the passage represents the writer as departing from the office of historian, and appearing in the capacity of one inspired with a knowledge of the secret things of God. 3rd, It is the only instance, if our author's application of the passage is correct, in which there is divine notice of the eternal state of certain individuals, independent of their final character. 4th, The proposition itself is a *truism*, for, according to our author's view, none but such as were fore-ordained to eternal life would believe. 5th, The

doctrine said to be contained in the passage is inconsistent with our author's system, for if *as many* as were ordained to eternal life *believed*, there were *no more* ordained to eternal life.

3rd, 1 Thess. v. 9. See above.

4th, 1 Thess. iv. 17. "Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This passage evidently proves, what our author intends it to do, that the saints of the Lord are entitled to everlasting life.

5th, Rom. xi. 29. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Our author, it would seem, intends this passage to prove that certain individuals are *unalterably* ordained to eternal life. After descanting on the abject state of God's once peculiar people, the apostle goes on to enliven the gloomy prospect by observing, that "they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in;—For," says he, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so *all* Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins, ver. 25—27. This view leads him to mention the twofold relation in which the Jewish

people stood towards God;—they were *enemies*, yet *beloved*. “As concerning the gospel, they are *enemies* for *your* sake: but as touching the election, they are *beloved* for the *fathers’* sakes,” ver. 28. The import of which is, they were *enemies* by reason of their *rejection of the gospel*, and they were *beloved* in consequence of their *connexion* with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. The apostle then adds the reason for their being beloved in consequence of their connexion with these patriarchs;—“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” The application of this general principle to the particular case of the Jews, is as follows: Although the Jewish people had shewn themselves unworthy of their high calling and distinguished gifts, God did not repent that he had made them his peculiar people in former times, but would, agreeably to his former kindness, still shew a readiness to accept them into his favour, on their believing in Jesus Christ.

6th, John x. 28, 29. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”—The period, when those who are, in the context of this passage, denominated Christ’s sheep, were given to him, was not before the foundation of the world, but when they were attached to him as his personal followers.—“All that the *Father* giveth me shall come to me,” John vi. 37. This giving seems to be synony-

mous with the divine *drawing*, thus—"No man can *come* to me, except the Father which hath sent me *draw* him," ver. 44. Again, this giving and drawing seem to consist in the imparting of the knowledge of the Messiah, as he is pointed out in the Old Testament—"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all *taught* of God. Every man therefore that hath *heard*, and hath *learned*, of the Father, *cometh* unto me," ver. 45. In short, this passage and its parallels are applicable only to our Lord's disciples as his personal followers.

VIII. "And inscribed their names in his book of life."

1st, Luke x. 20. "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."—This passage does not affirm that their names were written in heaven from eternity. The design of our Lord's advice, we conceive, was to shew, that the approbation of the Divine Being was more to be coveted than the power of working miracles. It is unnecessary to prove, that caution should be used in explaining the figurative language of Scripture. The admonition ought to be particularly attended to in this case, for we are told, that a man's name may be *blotted out* of the book of life. See Rev. iii. 5. xxii. 19.

2nd, Ps. iv. 3. "But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself."—The obvious meaning of this passage is, not that the Lord hath set apart from eternity certain individuals to be godly

in time, but that he, in time, sets apart for himself those who are *already* godly. At the second verse, the psalmist is saying to his enemies, "How long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?" He then addresses them in the words before us—"But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself." On this persuasion he builds his hopes for future protection—"The LORD *will hear* when I call unto him," ver. 3.

3rd, Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8. xvii. 8. See above.

IX. "And thus distinguished them from the rest of mankind, who were left in their corruption, and the misery thereby deserved."

1st, 1 Cor. iv. 7. "For who maketh thee to differ?" The apostle having, in the preceding chapters, enlarged on the evil of schism, and on the nature of the ministerial office, continues thus; "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for *your* sakes; that ye might learn in *us* not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another," ver. 6. Having thus shewn, that there was no room for vaunting on their part, in reference to the spiritual qualifications which he and Apollos enjoyed, he proceeds to shew, that there was no room for vaunting in reference to the spiritual qualifications which they themselves enjoyed; for the difference that was manifest among them, as it regards the extraordinary gifts and operations of the Spirit, (chap. xii. 4—10.) did

not originate in themselves, but was effected by the sovereign will of God, xii. 11. "For who maketh thee to differ," (or excel,) that there should be any occasion of being puffed up; for "what hast thou that thou didst not *receive*? Now if thou didst *receive*, why dost thou *glory*, as if thou didst not receive," ver. 7. He goes on ironically to reprove the boastful spirit of some of the gifted members of the church, saying, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you," ver. 8. He next shews how seemingly destitute and forlorn was the condition of himself and Apollos, ver. 9—13. In order to blunt the poignancy of these remarks, he adds, "I write not these things to *shame* you, but as my beloved sons I *warn* you. For though [such is the number of your members who excel in gifts, that it may be said] ye have ten thousand *instructors* in Christ, yet have ye not many *fathers*; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me," [in humility and lowliness of mind, for thus it becomes children to imitate their father.]

2nd, 1 Cor. i. 26—28. Rom. ix. 13. Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. See above.

X. "And in the same wise and unchangeable counsel, fixed the mediation of Christ, effectual calling to him, spiritual union with him, and an interest in and partaking of him and his righteous-

ness and fulness, together with faith and holiness, as means of their eternal salvation."

As the passages annexed to this head either have already been explained, or present a meaning so obvious as to require no explanation, it will be deemed unnecessary to do more than transcribe the references. These are as follow:—John iii. 16, 17. x. 26—29. xvii. 4, 6. Eph. i. 4. Col. i. 19. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Thes. v. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20. Rom. viii. 1—4, 28—30. Is. xlv. 24, 25. Acts xiii. 48. 2 Thes. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. xi. 6. xii. 14. John iii. 3, 5.

CHAPTER III.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE
THAT ARE REFERRED TO BY THE LATE REV.
JOHN BROWN, IN HIS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE,
UNDER THE ARTICLE—REPROBATION.

It will, in the first place, be proper to state the different views which have been either held, or supposed to be held, concerning reprobation.—1st, Reprobation is said to consist in a sovereign decree of God, which consigns to everlasting destruction certain persons of mankind, and appoints their sins as means to secure the accomplishment of that end. 2nd, Reprobation is said to consist in a sovereign decree of God, which consigns to everlasting destruction certain persons of mankind, on account of sin voluntarily committed by them. 3rd, Reprobation is said to consist in a judicial decree of God, which consigns to everlasting destruction all those who refuse to accept the salvation of the gospel.

It will appear, on inspection, that the view held by our author coincides with the *second* above stated.

He says, "Reprobation is an act of God, in which he, the absolutely independent, and infinitely sovereign, wise, powerful, righteous, and holy Jehovah, whose thoughts, judgments, and ways are unsearchable, intending to manifest the glory of his high sovereignty, almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, unbounded patience, and revenging justice, did, from all eternity, in his immutable purpose, according to his own mere good pleasure, pass by, and determine to leave certain persons of mankind, greater in number, but in themselves no worse than others, in the state of sin and misery, into which they would fall; not to know them with any distinguished regard,—not to love them with any particular good will,—not to pity them in order to their eternal salvation; did not choose, predestinate, set apart, or ordain them to eternal life; did not write their names in his book of life, or mark them out for his sheep, people, and subjects, and objects, and vessels of mercy, and in consequence hereof, determined to withhold from them the undeserved favours and reconciliation through Christ, and of effectual calling, justification, adoption, faith, and holiness, but not all external favours of common providence, or of gospel revelations and common influences, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and determined, that they, being of their own accord rendered miserable, by their sin, original and actual, against law or gospel,—and become despisers of his benefits, should in a wise, holy, and sovereign manner, answerably to their freedom of will, and their

rebellious dispositions, for their former sins, be further blinded in their mind, and hardened in their heart, given up to strong delusions, vile affections, and a reprobate sense; that persevering in their obstinate wickedness, and convicted by their own consciences of final impenitence, and neither capable to blame the severity of God, or to excuse themselves as ignorant of his will, or unable to resist his providence, or accept his offered salvation, should, as hated of God, appointed, separated, and fore-ordained to evil, wrath, and condemnation, and as children of wrath, vessels of mercy fitted to destruction, be for their sins eternally damned."

As a considerable part of the foregoing definition refers to Scripture facts, or Scripture delineations of character, it will, in such cases, be deemed unnecessary to quote and explain the passages referred to; and as a great deal of what remains consists of the negative of passages explained under the preceding article, it will, in general, suffice that the passages have been already examined. The first that calls for our attention is—

Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."—This passage is adduced by our author, in proof of the opinion that the divine sovereignty is exercised in the decree of reprobation; but, as it does not represent sin as the cause of punishment, it proves too much, viz. that the sins, as well as the punishment, of the wicked are decreed. The passage being un-

connected in sense with what precedes or follows it, and being somewhat obscure in itself, the safest mode of assigning the meaning, is to contrast it with that which appears to be the nearest parallel passage, "Do ye not know their tokens, that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath," Job xxi. 29, 30.

2nd, Rom. ix. 11. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any *good* or *evil*, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth."—This passage, taken in our author's view, proves too much. It proves that Esau was reprobated to eternal destruction without regard to his sins.

3rd, Matth. xxiv. 40, 41. "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."—This is a prophecy of what should take place, and not a revelation of the decree of reprobation. Consequently, the event might be a judicial, and not a sovereign act of God. The following paraphrase may tend to illustrate the passage—"I formerly told you, with relation to the temporal desolation of your country, and I now repeat it, that of two men who shall then be at work together in the field, the one shall be seized, and the other dismissed: and of two women who shall be grinding corn at the same mill, the one shall be seized, and the other dismissed. And I may say the like with respect to that important event of the

final judgment; many who have been engaged in the same station and employments, and who were intimately conversant with each other, shall then be found exceedingly different in their *characters and states*; and some of them shall be made the prisoners of divine justice, while others shall not only be spared, but be signally favoured by God."

4th, John xvii. 9. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."—The following particulars deserve our attention:—1st, The objects of Christ's prayer. 2nd, The subject of it; and 3rd, Who were not the objects of it.—1st, The objects of Christ's prayer—"I pray *for them*." Now the pronoun *them* refers us to persons previously spoken of. At the 6th verse it is said—"I have manifested thy name unto the *men* which thou gavest me *out of the world*: thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and they *have kept* thy word." In the 8th verse we read—"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they *have received* them, and *have known* surely that I came out from thee, and they *have believed* that thou hast sent me, (ver. 9.) I pray for *them*: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." This agrees with what was said of them in the 6th verse—"thine they were, and thou gavest them me," that is, Christ's apostles were given him out of the world. 2nd, The subject of Christ's prayer—*union and protection*. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those

whom thou hast given me, that they may be *one*, as we are," ver. 11. Again, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them *out of the world*, but that thou shouldest *keep* them from the *evil*," ver. 15. 3rd, Who were not the objects of Christ's prayer—The world, *as the world*. Christ could not have prayed that the world should be *one*, or that it should be *kept* from the *evil* of the world; yet we find the world *as believers* prayed for—"Neither pray I for *these* alone (meaning the apostles) but for them also which *shall believe* on me through their word, (ver. 20.) that they all may be one," ver. 21. Again, we find the world, *as the world*, the objects of Christ's supplication, the subject not being either union or protection, but *forgiveness*—"Father, *forgive* them; for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii. 34.

5th, John xii. 37—40. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." We will in this place insert Paul's quotation—"Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and

seeing ye shall see, and not perceive : for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed ; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with the heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *they will hear it.*" Acts xxviii. 25—28. From Paul's application of the prophet's address, we learn, that the words quoted were, in their primary sense, applicable to the " fathers" in the days of Isaiah, and, in a secondary and accommodated sense, to the unbelieving part of the Jews under the gospel dispensation. Hence it follows, that the words in question are so far from being a revelation of the decree of reprobation, that they occupy only the rank of a secondary and accommodated kind of prophecy. It is further worthy of remark, that the quotation from the prophet is uniformly restricted to the case of the unbelieving Jews, and consequently, it cannot support the application of it made by our author, who refers it to the case of all unbelievers.

Again, there were some in our Lord's day, concerning whom the words were not applicable, whose case nevertheless appears to have been equally hopeless with that of those who disbelieved. Thus, in a subsequent part of the chapter, (ver. 42, 43.) we read, " Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also *many believed* on him, but because of the Pharisees

they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the *praise* of *men* more than the *praise* of *God*. Further, we have reason to believe, that many of those, in our Lord's day, concerning whom the words were applicable, afterward believed to the saving of the soul. It was said by Jesus Christ, (Mark iv. 11.) "Unto *you* it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are *without*, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see," &c. Now, all those that believed on the day of Pentecost and subsequently, once ranked among them that were *without*, and, consequently, in them were fulfilled the words of Isaiah—"that seeing they may see," &c.

6th, Eph. ii. 8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." We propose the following translation as being fully more literal—"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, being the gift of God."—This passage is adduced by our author, in order to prove that God has decreed not to bestow the gift of faith upon certain individuals of mankind. Now, admitting that faith is the gift of God, in the sense in which our author holds it, still it does not follow, that, because it is a gift, it is sovereignly bestowed on some, and sovereignly withheld from others. But it is a subject of inquiry, whether or not faith is that which the apostle means to be understood by—"the gift of God." In the

preceding chapter, the apostle, after detailing the various blessings and privileges which believers in Christ enjoy, sums up the whole, by stating the relation in which Jesus Christ stands towards them; "He gave him (Jesus Christ) to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," ver. 22, 23. Having represented the church as the body of Christ, the apostle, still keeping up the figure, goes on to shew, that the Gentile believers, who formerly walked according to the course of this world, and "were dead in trespasses and sins," that is, *spiritually* dead, as it regards the performance of acceptable service to God; and *legally* dead, as it regards the state of justification before God; were now quickened from their twofold death into a living body, viz. the body of Jesus Christ, chap. ii. 1, 2. In like manner, he shews, that the Jews, by their vile affections and wicked practices, were, like the generality of other nations, "the children of wrath," that is, exposed to the wrath of God, ver. 3. "But," says the apostle, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were [legally and spiritually] dead in sins, hath *quickened* us [both Jews and Gentiles] together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath *raised* us *up* together, [into one body, as from the dead,] and made us *sit* together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," ver. 4—6.

Having thus represented the church of Christ, then consisting of believing Jews and Gentiles, as first

quickened, then *raised up*, and lastly *seated* in heavenly places with Christ, the apostle proceeds to state an important result, that should arise from such a constitution of the church, viz. "That in the ages to come, he (God) might shew the *exceeding riches* of his *grace* in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus," ver. 7. He assures the Ephesians of the justness of this observation, by declaring, "For by *grace* are ye saved through faith." Had their state of salvation not been by *grace*, it could not have been an occasion of shewing, in ages to come, the *exceeding riches* of God's *grace*. Now, as the apostle had declared, that they were saved by *grace*, it would naturally follow, that their salvation could not be of themselves, but be the gift of God. Again, had their salvation been of *themselves*, then, it is evident, that it would have been of *works*; but, says the apostle, it is "not of *works*, lest any man should *boast*. For we are his *workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus *unto* good works, which God hath before *ordained* that we should *walk* in them," ver. 9, 10. Hence it follows, that the words, "by faith," according to the train of reasoning above elicited, are merely supplementary to the phrase, "by grace are ye saved." Again, if we suppose faith, and not salvation, to be that which the apostle calls "the gift of God," we represent him as declaring, that *faith* is "not of *works*, lest any man should *boast*." We remark, lastly, that our exposition of the passage is corroborated by the grammatical construction of the original. But as

that circumstance is familiar to the learned, it is unnecessary for us to state the argument for their sake; and as the mere English reader might not perceive the force of the argument, it has been thought proper to decline altogether the introduction of such a mode of reasoning.

7th, Heb. vi. 4—6. x. 26—29. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”—“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

Our author’s design in referring to these passages, is to prove, that common influences, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, are not withheld from some of those who lie under the decree of reprobation. We have no doubt, that many of those who shall be ranked at

the left hand on the day of judgment, will be found to have enjoyed common influences, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; but the question here is, whether or not the apostle, in these two passages, describes the probable case of *real*, or the actual case of *false* Christians?

In introducing himself to the attention of his brethren "according to the flesh," (who were also believers in Christ,) the apostle states a fact, which he, doubtless, believed was universally admitted, viz. that "God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake *in time past* unto the *fathers* by the *prophets*, hath *in these last days* spoken [unto] *us* by his *Son*," ver. 1, 2. In order to shew the superiority of the gospel, he proves the unequalled dignity of its founder, ver. 2—14. From this consideration he infers, that "we ought to give the *more earnest* heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," ii. 1. Having thus intimated, that the superior dignity of Christ demands the greater watchfulness and fidelity, he proceeds to appeal to the fears of his brethren; "For," says he, "if the word spoken by *angels* was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we [believers in Christ] escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the *Lord*, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" ver. 2, 3.

Having invited his brethren to compare the character and office of Moses and Jesus Christ, the apostle

adds, "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, *as a servant*, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ, *as a Son* over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," ver. 5, 6. He then shews how particularly applicable to their case was the exhortation of the Psalmist. (Ps. xcv. 7.) "To-day if ye will hear his voice; harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness," &c. ver. 7—10. From this example he takes occasion to renew his work of exhortation—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of *you* an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be *hardened* through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence *steadfast* unto the end," ver. 12—14. Recurring to the example of the ancient Israelites, (ver. 15—18,) he makes this remark—"So we see that *they* could not enter in because of unbelief;" and exhorts thus, "Let *us* therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," ver. 19. iv. 1. Returning again to the consideration of the same subject, (ver. 2—10) he draws an inference of a similar nature.—"Let *us labour* therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man *fall* after the same example of *unbelief*," ver. 11. To induce them to exercise a godly fear over themselves, he assures them, that "the

word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," &c. ver. 12, 13. And for their encouragement, he also assures them, "that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," (ver. 14.) and adds, "let us," therefore, "hold fast our profession." But lest any should be intimidated by a consideration of the dignity of their high priest, he declares, that he is exceedingly compassionate, (ver. 15.) and, on this ground, exhorts them to "come *boldly* to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," ver. 16.

The apostle having thus called the attention of his brethren to the foregoing consideration of the priestly character of Christ, prolongs his remarks on the subject, (chap. v. 1—10.) and intimates his readiness to proceed still further, provided they were able to enter fully into the discussion; but, judging that they were unable, he declines the undertaking, at the same time assuring them that they had "need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God," ver. 11—14. He exhorts them, therefore, to endeavour to be well-grounded in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ," and to "go on to perfection, not laying *again* the foundation of *repentance* from dead works, and of faith toward God," chap. vi. 1. "And this will we do," says he, "if God permit," ver. 3. But not leaving the matter here, he adduces a powerful motive, by which they might be induced to "go on to per-

fection:—For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to *renew* them again unto *repentance*.” The substance of this motive seems to be, that, if any one should so far retrograde in his Christian course as to stand in need of applying that first principle of Christ which regards *repentance from dead works*, his case would be truly hopeless, seeing, that if he should deliberately renounce his allegiance to Christ, and hold him forth as an impostor, there could be no hope that he should be convinced of his error by evidence which he already possesses, and consequently, that it might justly be deemed impossible for any preacher of the word to be able to bring him to that state of repentance from dead works, in which he stood at the commencement of his Christian career.

Having asserted the awful possibility of apostatizing from Christianity in the manner above described, the apostle, anxious to clear himself from the charge of insinuating, that those to whom he particularly addressed his epistle, were in danger of falling into such foul apostasy, expresses his full conviction of the contrary, resting his hopes on the evidences of their faith and love, and on the divine faithfulness in reference to those who put their trust in God: “For God is *not unrighteous* to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye *have ministered* to the saints, and *do minister*. And we desire that every one of you do shew the *same* diligence to the full assurance of hope *unto*

the end; that ye be not slothful, but *followers* of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," ver. 10—12. Having intimated the necessity there is for the continued exercise of *faith* and *patience* in order to inherit the *promises*, he shews how reasonable it is so to do, seeing that God has shewn himself to be faithful to his promises, (ver. 13—18.) and has laid a firm foundation for the support of the Christian's hope; "which hope," says he, "we have as an anchor, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of *Melchisedec*." ver. 19, 20. From this point he digresses, in order to draw a contrast between Melchisedec and Jesus Christ, which contrast introduces one between Jesus Christ and the Jewish high priest, (chap. vii. 1—28. viii. 1—6) and this again gives the apostle an opportunity (viii. 6.) of contrasting the Mosaic and Christian covenants, the discussion of which runs on to chap. x. 18. Here again, the apostle, according to his usual method, practically applies the discussion on the above-mentioned topics, and says, "Having, therefore, *brethren*, *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an *high priest* over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our *hearts sprinkled* from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with

pure water. Let us *hold fast* the *profession* of our *faith* without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised,) and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works: *not forsaking* the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but *exhorting* one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth *no more* sacrifice for sins," &c. He then adds, "For we know him that hath said, *Vengeance* belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall *judge* his *people*. It is a fearful thing *to fall* into the hands of the living God," ver. 30, 31. After thus warning his brethren, he reminds them of their past fidelity under severe afflictions, (ver. 32—34) and exhorts them *not to* "*cast away* their confidence, which hath great recompense of reward," ver. 35. For their encouragement, he assures them, that "*he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry,*" ver. 37. He then, in the language of prophecy, shews who shall be saved, when the deliverer shall make his appearance, —"*Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*" ver. 38. But lest he should make any of his brethren disconsolate without cause, he adds, "*But we, [who have hitherto given proof of our stability, by enduring "a great fight of afflictions," and manifesting in our respective capacities a growing attachment to the cause of God,] are not of them who draw back unto*

perdition, but of them that *believe* to the saving of the soul," ver. 39.

It now lies with the reader to decide, whether or not the connexion in which the two passages under consideration are found, and the scope of the apostle's reasoning, warrant him to think, that the apostle is speaking of the possible case of those who had once been, or of those who had never been, true disciples of Jesus Christ.

8th, The following passages are referred to by our author, for the purpose of proving, that the reprobate are, for their *former sins*, further blinded in their mind, and hardened in their heart, given up to strong delusions, vile affections, and a reprobate sense."

Exod. xiv. 4. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them."—We have already seen, that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was a divine operation quite distinct from what our author means by it. So far was Pharaoh's heart from being hardened, or his will rendered obstinate, on account of his former sins, that, in the case under consideration, it was done, by the *sovereign will* of God, for the purpose of shewing forth the divine power in utterly destroying the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. And the apostle Paul assures us, that when such hardening takes place, it is for the accomplishment of the divine purposes—"whom he *will*, he hardeneth."

John xii. 40. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart," &c.—We have shewn, in the former examination of this passage, that the blinding

and hardening here mentioned were the effects of the voluntary operations of their own minds. The prophet, indeed, is represented as the instrument used in effecting these ends. "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy," &c. Is. vi. 9, 10. This blinding and hardening do not seem to be a punishment for their *former* sins, but to be sins for which they were to be afterward punished: see ver. 14.

Rom. xi. 7, 8. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were *blinded*."—That is, the rest had wilfully blinded their own eyes, according to the declaration of prophecy—"God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear," ver. 8. The apostle, however, sufficiently clears up the matter—"Have they stumbled *that they should fall*? God forbid," ver. 11. The reader should also remember that the above-quoted prophecies are uniformly restricted to the case of the unbelieving Jews, and not extended, as our author's statement implies they should be, to the case of unbelievers in general.

Rom. i. 24, 28. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness." Was this done "for their former sins?" No; but "because that, when they *knew* God, they glorified him not as God, &c. ver. 21—23.

2 Thess. ii. 11. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe

a lie."—For *what* cause? it may be asked. For their *former* sins? No; but because "they received not the love of the truth, *that they might be saved,*" ver. 10.

Is. lxvi. 4. "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them."—Were these things to be done for their *former* sins? No; but, saith the Lord, "because when *I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear,*" &c.

9th, In proving that part of the article which says that "certain men were fore-ordained to condemnation," our author refers us to the fourth verse of Jude's epistle: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." On turning to Peter's second epistle, we find notice taken of the same persons, whose character also is there described, and their punishment foretold. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be *false teachers* among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through *covetousness* shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not," chap. ii. 1—3.

From a comparison of the two passages, we are led to make the following remarks: 1. The Greek word rendered *condemnation* in Jude, is the same as that which is rendered *judgment* in Peter. 2. The words, "whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not," literally mean, "to them the punishment [threatened] of old lingereth not." 3. The words, "who were before of old ordained," literally signify, "who long ago have been fore-written." We have an instance of such a translation in Rom. xv. 4. "For whatsoever things *were written afore-time*, were written for our learning."

The following paraphrase of Jude 4, taken from a work formerly quoted, may be found to be satisfactory: "For some crafty and pernicious men have, as it were with a serpentine art, glided in among us, who were of old, as it were, described and registered to this condemnation, by God's righteous sentence denounced against crimes *like* theirs, long before they appeared in the world." This view is confirmed by what is added in the eleventh verse, of which the following is a paraphrase: "Wo is their portion; for in destroying the souls of their brethren by their false doctrine, they have followed Cain in the murder of his brother; and by misrepresenting the oracles of God for the sake of gain, they have run far in the error which Balaam followed for hire; and, on pretence of superior illumination, opposing the apostles of Christ, they shall perish, as the men who perished in the rebellion of Korah."

Again, it does not appear evident that our author's doctrine could be established on this passage, even supposing the word *ordained* to be preferable to the word *fore-written*. The persons spoken of were not ordained to condemnation for such sins as had no reference to the gospel, but for their rejection and corruption of the truth, for they "denied the Lord that bought them;" consequently, they must have been called to the reception of the gospel. Hence it follows, that, if they had been bought by the Lord, and yet refused to be saved by him, their condemnation was appointed on grounds essentially different from what our author wished to establish. But the apostle Peter informs us, that they not only refused to accept the salvation of the gospel themselves, but strenuously endeavoured to withdraw from the faith those that had escaped the pollutions of the world. 2 Pet. 1, 2, 15, 18, 20. Finally, it may be observed, that this passage, instead of referring to unbelievers in general, as our author's view requires it to do, refers only to false teachers, who had used every means in their power to corrupt the truth.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE
THAT ARE REFERRED TO BY THE LATE REV.
JOHN BROWN, IN HIS DICTIONARY OF THE
BIBLE, UNDER THE ARTICLE—PERSEVERANCE.

CONCERNING “PERSEVERANCE,” says our author, “whatever decays of grace the saints really have, if left to themselves, they would lose their whole stock of grace; and the use of watchfulness, and of other means of steadfastness, is necessary to their perseverance in their gracious state, nature, and course; yet their total or final fall from the same is evidently inconsistent with the unchangeable love, the justice, the wisdom, and faithfulness of God; inconsistent with his unchangeable purposes, promises, covenant, and oath; inconsistent with the honour of the Father as the chooser, as the giver of them to Christ for his reward, and as their establisher and keeper; inconsistent with the honour of the Son, as their purchaser, advocate, builder, shepherd, husband, life, and one body and spirit with them; inconsistent with the honour of the Holy Ghost, who is in them as a perpetual inhabitant, worker, comforter, fountain springing up

to everlasting life, seal of redemption, and earnest of glory."

Before entering on the examination of the following passages of scripture, it may be proper to remark, 1. That our author admits that "the saints may have partial decays of grace," or, in other words, that they may fall into gross sins. 2. That the Scripture distinguishes between the faithfulness of God, and the faithfulness of the believer; for it declares, that "God abideth faithful," and it exhorts the believer to "be faithful unto death." 3. That the doctrine of absolute perseverance, which is that held by our author, requires, that the faithfulness of God be engaged to secure the faithfulness of the believer; consequently, if the faithfulness of God is found, according to Scripture-testimony, to take for granted, instead of securing, the faithfulness of man, then the doctrine under consideration remains unproved.—Our author refers to—

Job xvii. 9. "The righteous also shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands, shall be stronger and stronger."—If this passage describes the absolute state of the righteous, then it opposes the doctrine of a *partial*, as much as that of a *complete*, decay of grace, and consequently proves too much for our author's purpose.

2nd, Prov. iv. 18. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—The same reasoning is applicable in this, as in the foregoing case.

3rd, Prov. x. 25. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation."—If this is spoken of the wicked and righteous when they leave this world, the latter clause has nothing to do with the doctrine of perseverance. And if it is spoken of them while they live in this world, our author's application would lead us to infer, that the wicked, as well as the righteous, never change character.

4th, Ps. ii. 8. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Let us add the next verse; "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."—The reader is left to judge whether this passage supports the doctrine of perseverance, or only proves Christ's sovereignty over the nations of the earth.

5th, Ps. cxxv. 2. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people, from henceforth even for ever."—The preceding verse says, "They that *trust* in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." Here it is evident, that the faithfulness of God is viewed as taking for granted the faithfulness of the people of God.

6th, Ps. cii. 28. "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."—This passage, taken in a spiritual sense, regards the *perpetuity* of the Christian church,

and not the *absolute perseverance* of each individual within it.

7th, Is. xlv. 10. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."—If it is the purpose and pleasure of God to secure the faithfulness of the believer, this passage assures us of the divine faithfulness so to do; but we learn from the preceding context, that the words were pronounced as a warning to presumptuous sinners. See ver. 8—10.

8th, Is. liv. 8—10. "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer," &c.—This passage regards the restoration of the Jews, and not the absolute perseverance of individuals.

9th, Is. lix. 20, 21. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth, and for ever."—This passage regards the general dispensations of God towards his ancient people the Jews, and the perpetual presence of the Spirit with the church; but proves nothing concerning the faithfulness of individual believers in Christ.

10th, Is. liii. 10. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou

shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."—This passage evidently regards the being, extension, and perpetuity of the church of Christ, and not the absolute perseverance of individuals.

11th, Jer. xxxii. 39—42. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me: yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. For thus saith the LORD, Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I promised them.—Here we have God's faithfulness avouched in behalf of his ancient people the Jews—primarily and literally as it regards their recovery from Babylon, and—secondarily and spiritually as it regards their conversion to Christianity. If we suppose these words, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," to be understood in an absolute sense, they would prove too much in reference to the doctrine of perseverance; for they would imply that a *partial*, is as impossible as a *complete*, decay of grace.

12th, Hosea ii. 19, 20. "And I will betroth thee

unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindnesses, and in mercies ; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness.”—In the fifteenth verse it is said, “ And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.” From this we see, that the prophecy contained in the foregoing verses refers to the final restoration of the Jews.

13th, Matth. xvi. 18. “ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—In this passage there is given to the church a promise of protection against all her enemies. If the promise were to be applied to the case of individuals, it would equally secure them from *partial*, as from *complete*, decays of grace.

14th, Matth. xxiv. 24. “ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”—The elect, in this case, are doubtless the chosen followers of Jesus Christ, who had enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with the person and character of their Lord and Master, and therefore could not be deceived concerning his assumed appearance. But although such persons could not be *deceived*, yet their “ love might wax cold,” and they might need to be informed—“ he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” See ver. 12, 13.

15th, Luke xxii. 32. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—The case of Peter's restoration can no more be considered as an instance in proof of the restoration of all that fall, than the conversion of Paul can be for a miraculous conversion of all that believe the gospel.

16th, John iv. 14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."—This passage treats of the *nature* of the living water which Jesus Christ would bestow, and not of its unfading permanency, in spite of carelessness, unwatchfulness, or presumption, on the part of its recipient; otherwise, *partial* decays of grace would be impossible. But if *partial* decays are possible, why not *complete* decays?

17th, John vi. 27. 35. 39, 40. 54—58. These passages assure us of the love and faithfulness of God, and take for granted, but do not secure, the faithfulness of the believer.

18th, John x. 10. 28, 29. The same remark as the foregoing is applicable here.

19th, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."—The import of this passage seems to be, that Jesus, who had loved his disciples ever since they became his followers, more particularly shewed his love to them in a circumstance which happened at the institution

of the Lord's Supper, a little before his removal from them. There can also be no doubt, that Christ's love towards his faithful followers extended not only to the end of his natural life, but continues unabated throughout eternity. The declaration of the Evangelist however is quite consistent with the necessity of abiding in Christ's love by keeping his commandments.

20th, John xiv. 16, 17, 19. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," &c.—The obvious meaning of this passage is, that Jesus Christ, their Lord and Master, since he was about to leave them, would send the Holy Spirit to supply his place, who should not leave them, as he himself was soon going to do. The only legitimate inference which may be drawn from this passage is, that the presence of the Holy Spirit with the church is permanent and not temporary. If we suppose the passage to prove, that the presence of the Spirit is perpetual in every heart where he once takes up his residence, there would be nearly as great difficulty in admitting an *occasional*, as a *final*, fall from grace.

21st, John xvii. 6, 12, 15, 20, 24. We have in the passages here referred to abundant proof of the strength and durability of Christ's love towards his disciples, and those that should believe in him through their word, but we have no proof that the love of Christ effectually secures abiding in his love, and keeping his commandments.

22nd, Acts xiii. 48. See above.

23rd, Rom. v. 21. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."—The meaning of this passage appears to be, that the grace of God, through Christ, is more extensive in its effects than was the sin of Adam; the latter reaching, in its direct influence, only to the death of the body, and the former, to the eternal life of both soul and body. But it does not follow, that, because eternal life is procured for men, it is sovereignly applied and secured to certain individuals.

24th, Rom. viii. 28—39. This passage shews, that all things work together for good to them that *love* God, and that no enemies, how powerful soever, shall baffle Omnipotence, or, how subtle soever, shall be able to alienate such from the love of God; consequently, that no circumstances, however adverse, can in the least affect the faithfulness of God's love towards them. But there is here no ground of security for the faithfulness of the believer, his persevering in faith and love being clearly understood.

25th, Rom. ix. 23. "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."—It is evident from what has already been advanced, that this passage regards the general dispensation of the gospel, and does not prove the absolute perseverance of individuals. It is therefore quite consistent with a warning such as thus—"Be not high minded, but fear;

for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee;" and is no less consistent with a declaration such as the following—"Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

26th, Rom. xi. 29. See above.

27th, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ: God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the fourth verse, the apostle says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge." He then declares that he considers their possession of spiritual gifts as a *confirmation* of the gospel which he preached—"Even," says he, "as the testimony of Christ was *confirmed* in you," ver. 6. The testimony which he bore to the truth of Christ's gospel having been confirmed among them by the communication of supernatural gifts, which gifts were bestowed, according to the grace and goodness of the Lord, the apostle, led by a peculiar train of ideas, makes use of the word *confirm*, in reference to the further display of God's mercy and grace in their saving operations.—"Who shall also confirm you unto the end," &c. This was the very design for

which God had manifested himself so gloriously in the conferring of spiritual gifts; for had the grace of God rested in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, it would not have redounded so much to the glory of God, as it does by the exhibition of the whole plan of salvation, as displayed in the conversion and entire sanctification of the believer.

The passage under consideration seems to have a parallel in 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.—“I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Faithful* is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”—In both passages the apostle vouches the faithfulness of God. Now this faithfulness of God evidently regards the confirming and establishing of believers in such a state as shall be exempt from blame or accusation at the day of Jesus Christ. Further, we may conceive the apostle as supposing the continuance of their faith, love, and patience, for he represents them as “*waiting* for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” ver. 7. The purport, then, of the passage seems to be, that God is faithful in the performance of his promises to his faithful and obedient people; and, therefore, our exposition is quite consistent with this caution—“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

28th, 1 Cor. vi. 15—19. “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!” &c.—It is evident from

inspection, that the object which the apostle has in view in this place, is not to shew, that the union between Christ and the members of his mystical body is indissoluble, but that such union should be a motive to abstain from fornication. If it were impossible to "make," (in the language of the apostle,) "the members of Christ," "members of an harlot," it would follow, that the union is indissoluble; but that such a thing is not impossible, seems to be implied in the following exhortations—"Flee fornication." "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your *body*, and in your spirit, which are God's," ver. 18, 20. Further, our author's own admission concerning *partial decays* of grace implies the same thing.

29th, 1 Cor. x. 13. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—At the close of the preceding chapter, the apostle, alluding to the watchfulness which he exercised over himself, says, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." He then in the commencement of this chapter, presents to their consideration the case of the ancient Israelites, who, although they had been signally owned of God, (ver. 1—4) became the victims of their folly and wick-

edness, for "with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness," ver. 5. He next goes on to state, that "these things were our examples;" and that by them Christians should be deterred from falling into the same or similar crimes, ver. 6—11. "Wherefore," adds he, "let him that thinketh he standeth (that is, is confident of his stability) take heed lest he fall," ver. 12. But, on the supposition that they continued to exercise the necessary diligence and watchfulness, he observes, for their comfort, that "there hath no temptation taken them," &c. The result of our investigation then is, that we have the fullest assurance, that God is faithful to the promises of gracious assistance and protection which he has given to the faithful; but we have no ground to think, that his faithfulness secures the believer against the possibility of falling from the state of grace.

Again, if our author's view is supported by this passage, it follows, that no real Christian can fall into temptation, and be overcome, which conclusion our author's admission disallows.

30th, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." At the 14th verse the apostle says—"Ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." Fully assured of their mutual joy, the apostle purposed, on the ground of such

assurance, to pay them a visit, saying—"And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia," &c. ver. 15, 16. The apostle, however, altered his mind concerning the proposed journey, and as he supposed that he would be charged with fickleness of purpose, he adds, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?" He then appeals, in proof of his sincerity, to the success of his ministerial labours among them. "But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea," ver. 18, 19. This he shews was agreeable to the general economy of the gospel—"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." As a proof of his position, he refers to their religious *state* before God—"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God," &c.—It is therefore obvious, that the scope of the apostle's reasoning regards not the perseverance of individuals, but the gracious state of all true believers. Besides, if the former were meant, it would as effectually preclude the possibility of a *partial*, as of a *final*, fall from grace.

31st, 2 Cor. iii. 3. "Forasmuch as ye are mani-

festly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”—The apostle declares, that in reference to his apostolical authority, he had need of no other proof than the fact of their conversion to Christianity; which fact served as a letter of recommendation to them, and the report of which served to others as a letter of recommendation from them—“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”—It is evident, therefore, that it was the *manifestation*, and not the *permanency*, of the work of God among the Corinthians, which occupied the apostle’s attention. Further, a *partial*, no less than a *complete*, decay of grace, would have had the effect of obscuring that manifestation.

32nd, Gal. ii. 20. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”—If Christ lives in the Christian by faith on the part of the Christian, and if a man ceases to live by faith in proportion as grace decays, then Christ may cease to live in the man who ceases to exercise faith; and if this may take place for a season, there is nothing in this passage which assures us that it may not be the case for ever.

33rd, Eph. i. 13, 14. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."—The import of this passage seems to be, that the Ephesians, after they believed, received the gift of the Holy Ghost, which had been promised by the prophets of old, and by Jesus Christ before his departure out of this world; also, that they became, by the indwelling of the Spirit, the sealed property of God, having been previously purchased by the blood of his Son; and that the same indwelling of the Spirit acted as an earnest on the part of God, for the faithful performance of the promise which had been made in reference to an eternal inheritance. This view of the subject, however, leaves it still undecided, whether or not the power of God is engaged to preserve the believer faithful unto death.

34th, Eph. iv. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—An exposition similar to the foregoing will also answer in this place. If believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption in an absolute sense, then they are equally secured from a *partial*, as from a *complete*, decay of grace.

35th, Eph. v. 25—30. This passage regards the actual relation that subsists between Jesus Christ and his church; but, as it respects individuals, it does not render unnecessary such a caution as this—"Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Now, whether this caution should be found to regard an *occasional* or a *final* separation from Christ, the argument founded on the passage above referred to, is alike untenable.

36th, Philip. i. 6. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."—The apostle commences his epistle to the Philippians pretty much in the same way as he does several of his other epistles, by expressing the sense of gratitude which he felt towards God, on account of the gracious state of the converts whom he addresses, and the desire which he had for a continuance of their spiritual prosperity; thus—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, (always, in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy,) for your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day till now; being confident of this very thing," &c. Having said that their fellowship in the gospel, even from the day of their conversion until the time at which he was writing his epistle, was, on his part, the subject of continued thanksgiving to God, he intimates that he also continually prayed for the completion of the work which he had been instrumental in beginning among them. But there is a peculiarity in his prayer for the Philippians, which is worthy of our observation. He prayed for them not merely in *faith*, but with *joy*—"making request," says he, "with joy." He then goes on to assign the reason for his praying for them with joy—"Being confident of this very

thing, that he which hath *begun* a good work in you will perform (or *finish*) it until the day of Jesus Christ." He next proceeds to give the ground of his confidence—"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ," ver. 7, 8. There being considerable ambiguity in the authorized translation of the seventh verse, the following, in some parts more literal, and in others more free, is presented to the reader's consideration: "As it is just for me to think this concerning you all, because I have you in my heart, ye all having been contributors to the supply which you sent me, while in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel." The following remarks, we presume, will tend to establish and illustrate the facts contained in the foregoing translation: 1. Paul preached the gospel at Rome while in bonds, Acts xxviii. 16. Philip. 1. 13. 2. The Philippians administered to the apostle's wants while he was at Rome: "I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God," iv. 15. 3. The word rendered *partakers* is a participle of the verb which is rendered *communicate*, (chap. iv. 14.) "Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did *communicate* with my affliction." Now, the import of the word

communicate will appear, from the subsequent verses, to be the same as that which we have given it in the foregoing translation. "Know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church *communicated* with me as concerning *giving* and *receiving*, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye *sent* once and again *unto my necessity*," ver. 15, 16. 4. The word rendered *grace*, frequently signifies a voluntary contribution made towards the necessities of others, and is translated *gift*, as in the following passage, (2 Cor. viii. 4.) "Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the *gift*, and take upon us the *fellowship* of the ministering to the saints." Here we may also observe, that the word rendered *fellowship*, is of a kindred nature with that rendered *communicate* and *partakers*, in the above-quoted passages, and evidently denotes that relation which subsists between the giver and receiver of a gift of charity.

On a review of the whole, we find, 1. That Paul was confident, that God would finish the work which he had begun among the Philippians. 2. That the ground of this confidence was the reasonableness of the thing: "It is *just* for me to think this concerning you all." 3. The ground of the reasonableness of the thing consisted in their character, viz. in their love to the saints, and especially to him: "And this I pray, that your *love* may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment," chap i. 9. The apostle next declares that, because of the display of

such Christian conduct, he had them always in his heart, and that he greatly longed after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ. That the emotion which animated him, was of a more exalted nature than even gratitude for a supply of his wants, is obvious from a subsequent declaration—"Ye have well done," says he, "that ye did communicate with my affliction."—"Not because I desire a *gift*; but I desire *fruit* that may abound to your account."—"The things which were sent from you are an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God," iv. 14, 17, 18. Looking therefore at their present character, and relying on a continuance of it, he says, "But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus:" (ver. 19.) as if he had said, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered, and do minister, to "me who am one of" the "least of saints." The full import of the passage under consideration, therefore, seems to be, that, relying on the indications of genuine piety, and unshaken stability, which the conduct of the Philippians presented, and taking for granted, that God would be faithful to the promises which he had made in behalf of persons of such a character, the apostle felt the strongest confidence, that the work which had been begun among them, would be found completely finished at the day of Christ's second coming.

Finally, the view which our author takes of the

passage, in order to support the doctrine of the absolute perseverance of the saints, opposes the doctrine of a *partial* decay of grace, as much as it does that which maintains the possibility of a *complete* decay.

37th, Philip. ii. 13. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—This is assigned by the apostle as a reason why the Philippians should be induced, in the midst of their persecutions and trials, to work out their own salvation, ver. 12. Their state of trial, indeed, required them to work with *fear* and *trembling*. But lest they should be discouraged, the apostle assures them that the inclination to will, and the capacity to do, what is acceptable to God, originates in the assistance which he graciously affords to all true believers in Jesus Christ; consequently, they had nothing to fear from the *difficulty* of persevering in the exercise of faith and acts of holy obedience. If this passage means, that the grace which works in believers to will and to do, is of such a nature as effectually to secure the submission of the will, then a *partial* decay of grace is as impossible as a *complete* decay, and an *occasional fall*, as a *final* one.

38th, Col. iii. 3. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—In the preceding chapter, (ver. 20) the apostle addresses the Colossians thus; "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances." That is, having been quickened from legal death, and raised to legal life, by

the merits of Jesus Christ, why do ye endeavour, either to perfect your justified state before God, by resting in the Mosaic rites, now abolished, or to confirm it, by relying on human inventions, not divinely authorized? The apostle then practically applies the doctrine of legal resurrection through Christ—"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead," &c. chap. iii. 1—3. Hence the meaning of the last verse seems to be,—"For ye are dead to the world, as it regards deriving either safety or comfort from it, and your life of justification is concealed, and therefore safely laid up, with Christ in God." The apostle, then, assigns a further reason why they ought to set their affections on *things above*—"When Christ, who is *our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with him in glory*," ver. 4. That is, "being now justified by his blood, we *shall be saved from wrath* through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. v. 9, 10. Now, as faithfulness on the part of the believer is represented, in Scripture, as indispensable to the enjoyment of eternal life, and as this passage evidently takes that faithfulness for granted, it therefore proves nothing concerning the doctrine of a divine security for the faithfulness of the believer.

39th, Titus ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that

he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." At the ninth verse, the apostle directs Titus to "exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity," ver. 9, 10. He then adduces a powerful motive for the due performance of the duties which servants owe to their masters—"That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," ver. 10. Now as one class of duties becomes incumbent on us by reason of a general law concerning all classes, the apostle next urges the influence of the preceptive part of the gospel, which enjoins universal rectitude as displayed in the performance of duties that are owing to God, to others, and to ourselves—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live *soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world." Having mentioned *this present world*, the apostle leads us to view the gospel as regards its promises in reference to *another world*—"Looking," says he, "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," ver. 13. Having thus alluded to the *second* coming of Christ, he takes occasion further to strengthen his position, by declaring what was the design of Christ's *first* coming into the world—"Who gave himself for us," &c. Having thus declared what was the general design of the gospel of

Christ, viz. a restoration of all believers to a state of moral rectitude, viz. *godliness*, as it regards our relation to the Divine Being; *righteousness*, as it regards our relation to our fellow creatures; and *sobriety*, as it regards ourselves; the apostle authorizes Titus to "speak these things, and exhort, and to rebuke with all authority," ver. 15. Now it is evident, that the scope of the apostle's instructions leaves the question of the absolute perseverance of the saints untouched; and therefore the doctrine may or may not be true, for aught the apostle's testimony declares in this passage.

40th, Heb. iii. 3. vi. 17, 18, 19. The truths contained in these passages are exhibited as the ground of rational confidence; such a confidence as is quite consistent with "fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into" the eternal "rest, any of us should seem to come short of it."

41st, 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."—The slightest attention to the context will shew, that the meaning of this passage is, that all believers are kept unto salvation by the power of God through faith. It is obvious, that, if the keeping here mentioned is absolute, there is as great an impossibility of a *partial*, as of a *complete*, decay of grace. The doctrine contained in the passage therefore is evidently consistent with such an exhortation as this—"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, (or firm;) for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

42nd, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 19. See a former exposition.

43rd, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us."—The first question that here presents itself is, who went out? Antichrists, or false teachers—"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us," &c. ver. 18, 19. The second question is, from whom went they out? "From us"—the apostles and inspired teachers of the church of Christ. The apostle adds, "For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us;" that is, had those false teachers ever been divinely illuminated with the knowledge of God's will, they would, agreeably to the unity of the truth, have continued in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles. But this circumstance is no proof that persons "who" may "have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," shall not be "again entangled therein, and overcome," so that "the latter end" shall be "worse with them than the beginning."

44th, 1 John iii. 9. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."—The following translation is presented for the purpose of aiding our investigation: "Whosoever hath been

begotten of God doth not live in sin ; for his (that is, God's) seed abideth in him : and he cannot commit sin, because he hath been begotten of God." At the first verse, the apostle directs the attention of his brethren to the love of God as manifested in their adoption into the family of God ; and next to a consequence of that adoption, viz. conformity to the divine likeness, when Jesus Christ shall make his appearance. Having thus shewn what they were, and what they should be, by grace, he affirms that it follows, as a natural consequence, that "every one that hath this *hope* in him, *purifieth* himself even as he is pure."

Now, there were some, it would seem, that endeavoured to separate faith from holiness, but all such, the apostle declares, were deceivers, for "the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil," and such advocates for sin he declares to be the children of the devil, "for the devil sinneth from the beginning," ver. 8. Then adds the apostle, on the contrary—"whosoever is begotten of God doth not live in sin." The reason is obvious, for the word of God, the seed, by which believers are begotten, (1 Pet. i. 28.) abideth in him. Further, so far is he that is begotten of God from living in sin, that he does not even deliberately commit sin at any time, for this very reason, that he is begotten of God. But if it should be found that a believer may fall from grace so as deliberately to commit sin, it follows, that the seed, or word, of God

does not dwell in him for the time being; and, if it cease to dwell for a season, it may be asked, why may it not cease altogether? The passage under review, therefore, gives us no assurance that the seed of God will not cease to abide in the believer, but, as we conceive, simply declares, that sin cannot be deliberately committed by him in whose heart "the word of God abideth."

CHAPTER V.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE THAT ARE QUOTED BY THE LATE REV. THOMAS SCOTT, IN HIS SERMON ON—"ELECTION AND FINAL PERSEVERANCE,"—IN SUPPORT OF HIS VIEWS OF THE DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, AS IT REGARDS THE SALVATION OF MANKIND.

OUR author assures us, that he "earnestly desires the candid inquirer after truth, and all who dare to think for themselves, to examine the passages quoted from Scripture in this sermon, and to observe accurately whether they do not fully establish his statement."—*Preface to the fifth edition.*

Our author's statement concerning the doctrines of election and perseverance will, we conceive, be fully understood from the following quotations:—"The reader will perceive, that the principal difference betwixt the statement here given of the doctrines in question, and that of many modern Calvinists, relates to redemption by the death of Christ, as being of *infinite sufficiency*, and therefore in some respects the *common benefit of mankind*."—"On this ground we may say to any human being, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.' But on the other plan, no sinner can know, previously to conversion, whether he has any more right to rely on the merits and mediation of Christ, than fallen angels have."—*Preface*.

It would appear, however, that our author comes short of some even of those whom he styles modern Calvinists, in respect to the *design* of the atonement made by Jesus Christ. "His death," says our author, "was a *sufficient* atonement for all."—"But he foresaw who would eventually partake of this infinite ransom, and for them he *specially* paid it."—p. 17.

1st, The first passage which demands our attention is that which is taken for the ground of discourse—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi. 37—40.

We are informed in a preceding part of the chapter just quoted, that the multitude whom Jesus had miraculously fed with five loaves and two small fishes, having missed Jesus, who had crossed the sea of Tiberias during night, went also to the other side in order to find him. The true cause, however, of this anxiety to discover where Jesus was, did not lie concealed from the eye of Omniscience; for we are informed, that Jesus said to them, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled," ver. 26. Jesus, therefore, taking occasion from this circumstance, exhorts them to "*labour* for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," ver. 27. Seemingly sensible of the propriety of attending to this injunction, the Jews reply, by way of asking information, "What shall we do, that we may *work* the works of God?" Thus it seems that they were anxious to *labour* for everlasting life, but professed their ignorance of the *mode* of working. "Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is the *work* of God, that ye *believe* on him whom he hath sent," ver. 29. The Jews, professing their willingness to *believe* on Jesus Christ, request such kind of evidence as was afforded in attestation of the mission of Moses. "They said therefore unto him,

What *sign* shewest thou then, that we may see and *believe* thee? what dost thou work? Our *fathers* [for their conviction of the divine mission of Moses] did eat manna in the desert, as it written, He gave them bread *from heaven* to eat," ver. 30, 31. To this appeal Jesus replies, "Verily, I say unto you, *Moses* gave you not that bread from heaven," ver. 32. Making a transition from supernatural to spiritual bread, Jesus turns their attention from the evidence to the substance of his mission—"But *my Father* giveth you the *true bread* from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world," ver. 32, 33. Our Lord having spoken of himself in this general way, the Jews reply with seeming earnestness, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," ver. 34. Having thus extorted from them a confession of their spiritual need, and an expression of desire to obtain a supply of it, Jesus explicitly declares, "I am the bread of life," ver. 35. Now, the manna in the wilderness, although supernatural, operated on the bodily frame of the Israelites in the same manner as natural or common bread does, and therefore did not prevent them from being regularly subject to the calls of hunger; but Jesus informs his hearers, that the spiritual food of which he had been speaking, was, in its nature, perpetually satisfying:—"He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," ver. 35. Our Lord's hearers, however, although thus directed to the

means of possessing the spiritual food of which they seemed to be very desirous, had already in a great measure precluded themselves from the probability of enjoying it, by reason of their stupid ignorance and confirmed prejudices. "But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not," ver. 36. The discourse here alluded to is found in the preceding chapter. We shall quote from the 36th verse. "But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed *Moses*, ye would have believed *me*: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Here we may clearly see the various causes of the unbelief of the Jews—The leading cause was their disbelief in the writings of Moses;—this was the cause of the word of God not abiding in them;—this was the cause of their not having the love of God in them;—this was the cause of their not seeking the honour which cometh from God;—and this was the cause of their not receiving him whom the Father had sent. To this description, however, there were some exceptions; for a few seem to have been acquainted with the character of the promised Messiah. We read that Philip, on finding Nathanael, said to him, —“We have found him of whom *Moses* in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” chap. i. 45. And that there were persons whose character was directly opposite to that which has just been delineated, is evident from the testimony which Christ bore to the character of Nathanael, and also from Nathanael’s own conduct as displayed in his promptitude in inquiring after truth, and his readiness to submit to the force of truth when discovered. “And Nathanael said unto him, (Philip) Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming unto him, and saith of him, Behold an *Israelite indeed*, in whom is *no guile*! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him,

Rabbi, *thou* art the Son of God ; *thou* art the King of Israel," ver. 46—49. The same remark might be made concerning Peter and Andrew his brother ; for in the same chapter it is written—"He (Andrew) findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, (which is, being interpreted, the Christ.) And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas, (which is, by interpretation, a stone [or Peter.])" Hence it would appear, that this proof of Christ's omniscience convinced Peter, as the above mentioned proof of his omnipresence convinced Nathanael. It would also seem, that our Lord alluded to the state of Peter's knowledge of the character of the Messiah, and the process of conviction which took place in his mind, when he said, in reply to Peter's confession, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God,—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona (or son of Jona :) for *flesh and blood* hath not revealed it unto thee, but *my Father* which is in heaven," Matth. xvi. 17. That this divine revelation consisted in the enlightening of the understanding of the sincere Jew, who diligently searched the Scriptures of the Old Testament, will appear from the following declaration of Jesus Christ, found in immediate connexion with the passage under review—"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," ver. 43. Hence it fol-



lows that Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and all the other true disciples of Jesus Christ, were, as sincere Jews, first taught of God ; and thus, having heard and learned of the Father, came afterward unto Jesus Christ ; consequently, such persons, by reason of their having been previously taught of God, might have been said, when they came to Jesus Christ, to have been given and drawn to him by God the Father who had sent him. This leads us to resume the connexion of Christ's discourse, " All that the Father *giveth* me shall [or will] come to me," ver. 37. And as there was a complete unity of design between the Father who sent, and Jesus Christ who was sent, so, those whom the Father gave to Jesus Christ were most cordially received ;—" And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," ver. 37. Then follows the reason above assigned. " For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," ver. 38. Again, the end for which Christ cordially received those who came to him, is next represented as the fulfilment of the Father's will—" And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day." That is, those who were given to Jesus Christ as his disciples, were to be kept by the power of Christ from all their enemies, and finally raised from the prison-house of the grave. But as this promise of security extended only to the resurrection from the dead, Jesus further enlarges, and shows, that he

was pledged to give his faithful followers *everlasting life*. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day," ver. 40.

It is quite unnecessary to remark, that the passage which has been under examination, cannot be justly applied to the case of any, but those who were the personal followers of Jesus Christ. It will also follow, from the foregoing analysis, that the period when Christ's disciples were given to him, was, at the time they were drawn by the Father's illuminating influence; and that the security which Jesus Christ vouches in their behalf, regarded solely his own faithfulness, and took for granted theirs, as if he had said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

2nd, Our author says, "Let the blessings of the gospel be fairly proposed, with solemn warnings and pressing invitations, to two men of exactly the same character and disposition: if they were left to themselves, in entirely similar circumstances, the effect must be precisely the same. But, behold! while one proudly scorns and resents the gracious offer; the other trembles, weeps, prays, repents, believes! 'Who maketh this man to differ from the other? or what hath he that he hath not received?'" p. 12.—The last sentence is, doubtless, intended as an exhibition of the apostle's meaning in 1 Cor. iv. 7. The

reader will recollect that that passage refers to the distinction which subsisted between such members of the church of Corinth as were endowed with the gifts of the Spirit, and such as were not. Admitting, what we firmly believe, that the grace of God is the efficient cause of conversion, does it follow that its operation must be irresistible? If Scripture has said so, let the evidence be produced. Further, it is evident that the person who, at one time, "proudly scorns and resents the gracious offer" of the gospel, may afterward "tremble, weep, pray, repent, and believe;" consequently, the difficulty propounded by our author should have been, not why one man is converted, and another not; but why the same man is converted at one period of his life, and not at another. It is evident that our author's view of election will not solve this difficulty: as little could his view of the passage of Scripture which is next to be examined.

3rd, Our author continues, "The scriptural answer to this question, when properly understood, decides the whole controversy. Human depravity produces different effects in vast variety, and gathers strength by habit; but, in its root and nature, it is the same, and equal in all men. This can be effectually overcome by nothing except a new creation, a 'work wrought by the exceeding greatness of that mighty power, which raised Christ from the dead.'" p. 12.—The words which are given above in the form of a quotation from Scripture, appear to be an abridg-

ment of the following passage: "That ye may know" "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. i. 18—20. For a full understanding of the passage, it is necessary that we examine the preceding and subsequent context. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

It is evident, 1. That the persons for whom the apostle prayed were "the saints which were at

Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus," ver. 1. 2. That the subject of his prayer was divine illumination, ver. 17, 18. 3. That the purpose of this illumination was, that they might know—"what was the hope of God's calling"—"what were the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"—and "what was the exceeding greatness of his power towards them who believe." 4. That the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them who believe, was "according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ;" which working was displayed—in raising Christ from the dead—in setting him down at his own right hand—in putting all things under his feet—and in constituting him the head over all things to the church. Hence it follows, that the power which is here said to be toward them that believe, is not the efficient power of the Holy Spirit as manifested in the work of conversion. This will appear from the following considerations.—

1. The persons towards whom this power is said to work, were persons already converted, and therefore the working spoken of by the apostle could not have been that which takes place in the conversion of the sinner. 2. That, if the power spoken of had been the efficient power of the Holy Spirit, as manifested in conversion, and, consequently, a matter of experience, there would have been no necessity for the apostle to pray, that the Ephesians might receive "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," in order to know that which they already knew by experience.

3. That the working of God's mighty power, as displayed in Jesus Christ, was not that of the power of *efficiency*, but that of the power of *glory*; not, strictly speaking, wrought in Christ *personally*, but towards him *relatively*; so, in like manner, the exceeding greatness of God's power towards believers, is that of the power of *glory*, and not that of the power of *efficiency*; not wrought in them *personally*, but towards them *relatively*. 4. That the exceeding greatness of the power spoken of does not refer to that which takes place in conversion, is further evident from this circumstance, that the apostle places the consideration of it immediately after that of —“the hope of God's calling,” and “the riches of his inheritance in the saints,” which marks of God's gracious goodness are evidently not *personal* but *relative*: blessings, and as such, in order to be known, needed to be revealed by “the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge.”

4th, “This distinguishing grace,” [as exhibited in the above supposed case] adds our author, “is previously neither *deserved* nor *desired* by either of them: it might justly have been withheld from both; but it is graciously communicated to one, and not to the other, by a sovereign God, ‘according to the counsel of his own will.’ He, and he alone, ‘hath made one to differ from another.’” p. 12.—Having already seen how inapplicable the latter quotation is, let us pause a little to consider the propriety of the former —“according to the counsel of his own will.” Eph. i. 11.



At the 9th verse the apostle observes, that God had made known the mystery of his will; which mystery he declares, at the 10th verse, to have had regard to the constitution of the Christian church—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ." Concerning one part—the believing Jews, he says—"In whom also *we* have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory, who *first* trusted in Christ," ver. 11, 12. Here it may be remarked, that all God's works, whether in reference to creation, providence, or grace, are after the counsel of his own will. The particular instance which the apostle gives, is the appointing of Jewish believers to be to the praise of his glory, as being the *first fruits* of the Christian harvest. But it remains to be proved, that the difference which subsists between the believer and the unbeliever, is effected in the same sovereign and absolute manner.

5th, "But where none has any claim, may not the great Ruler of the universe bestow his unmerited favours on whom he will? Is he alone restricted from 'doing what he will with his own?' Seeing that none either deserve or desire mercy in *his appointed way*, but all harden themselves in impenitent and obstinate rebellion; in high sovereignty he declares, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will

have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.'—'Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' Not but that all who are saved, do run and seek; and 'every one that seeketh findeth.'" p. 16.—Our author says, "But where none has any claim, may not the great Ruler of the universe bestow his unmerited favours on whom he will?" Most certainly. But the question is not, *may not* God do so? but, has he *declared* that he does so? The passages of Scripture which are quoted, have already been shown to have no reference to the limitation of the number of those that shall be saved. Our author's application of one of those passages tends to confirm our former exposition of it, for he is led actually to contradict the plain language of Scripture. It says, "So then, it is not of him that *willeth*, nor of him that *runneth*;" yet our author says, "Not but that all who are saved *do run*."

6th, "When, therefore, he appointed his beloved Son for salvation to the ends of the earth; that his grace might not be frustrated by man's perverseness, as otherwise it must have been; while he saw good to leave others under the condemnation of the law, and through the tendency of their evil nature to reject the gospel, 'from the beginning he chose' a people 'unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he calls them by the gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord

Jesus Christ,'” 2 Thess. ii. 14. p. 16.—It is quite consistent with what we have remarked (Chapter I.) on the state of salvation, that, “as our author says, from the beginning God chose a people unto salvation,” &c. but the passage, in this case, is evidently misapplied, for it referred originally and exclusively to the state and condition of the Thessalonian church.

7th, Our author adds, “These are the persons spoken of in the text, as ‘given unto Christ’ by some mysterious transaction, (according to our low apprehensions,) betwixt the Father and the Son, when he undertook the work of redemption.” p. 17.—We have endeavoured to shew, that the persons spoken of in the text were only the personal followers of Jesus Christ, and that they were not given to Jesus Christ when he undertook the work of redemption, but when they came to him as believers in the promised Messiah.

8th, “‘Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; *for I have much people in this city,*’ saith he to persecuted Paul at Corinth, concerning the licentious inhabitants, Acts xviii. 9, 10.” p. 17.—The declaration “I have much people in this city,” can be viewed only in a *prospective* light, for God’s people are not a *licentious* but a *holy* people, see 1 Peter ii. 9, 10. Consequently, our author’s view of election receives no support from this passage.

9th, “Thus he separates his elect by new creating

grace, (alluding to Eph. ii. 1—10.) and makes them 'a willing people in the day of his power, in the beauties of holiness,' Ps. cx. 3. p. 17.—The passage, in its scripture-form, is as follows: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." There are, in this passage, three things which claim our attention. First, the person addressed; secondly, the persons styled his people; and thirdly, the conduct of such persons.

1. The first thing which deserves to be considered is the person addressed, "*Thy* people," &c. At the commencement of the psalm, we read thus, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Who then is the psalmist's Lord? A satisfactory answer to this question will be found in the quotations that follow: Jesus Christ, in one of his discourses, asked the Pharisees this question, "What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?" The answer given was, "The Son of David." It is further recorded, that Christ said unto them, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" It is then added, "And no man was able to answer him a word." Matth. xxii. 42—46. Hence it is evident, that the person whom David calls his Lord, is none other than the

Messiah or the Christ. Again, the apostle Peter avers, that this same person is none else than Jesus Christ: "For David," says he, "is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same *Jesus*, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and *Christ*." Acts ii. 34—36. It is evident from the first verse of the psalm, that the person addressed was to appear as a prince—"Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In like manner the apostle Paul ascribes this princely authority to Jesus Christ—"For he (Christ) must *reign*, till he (God) hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. The same psalm assures us, that the person addressed shall appear in the priestly character—"The LORD hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec," ver. 4. This priestly character is also ascribed to Jesus Christ—"So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Heb. v. 5, 6. Hence it follows, that this psalm treats, in a figurative manner, of the priestly and kingly offices of Jesus Christ, who is the mediator between God and men.

2. We come, secondly, to consider who are the persons that are designated the Messiah's people—*"Thy people shall be willing,"* &c. At the first verse of the psalm, we read, that the LORD was to make the *enemies* of David's Lord his *footstool*. And at the second, that David's Lord was to *rule* in the midst of *his enemies*. Now it is to be expected, that, as David's Lord had *enemies*, he should also have a *faithful people*. And if, figuratively, he was to receive his enemies as his footstool, and rule in the midst of them, it was necessary that, figuratively, he should have an army that would vindicate his rights, and inflict vengeance on his obdurate enemies. This brings us,—

3. Lastly, to consider the conduct of those who are called the Messiah's people: *"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."* Let us first inquire what is meant by the day of the Messiah's power. In a subsequent verse it is said, *"The LORD at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath."*—Now, as the LORD had engaged to subdue the enemies of the Messiah, and to cause him to rule in the midst of them, it is highly probable that the Messiah himself would be engaged in the work of subduing and punishing, and therefore the signal victory which he should obtain, would entitle the day of his conflict to be called—"the day of his power," seeing that it was also the day of Jehovah's wrath. That the Messiah was thus to be engaged, is evident from another prophecy, (Ps. ii. 9, 12.) *"Thou shalt*

break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."—"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Secondly, the Messiah's faithful subjects are said to be a *willing people* in the day of his power. That is, they should, in figurative language, be the willing instruments of avenging the Messiah of his enemies. This exposition is confirmed by the testimony of other prophecies. The same inspired penman writes thus—"Let the saints be joyful in glory ; let them sing aloud upon their beds ; let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the judgment written : *this honour have all his saints.*" Ps. cxlix. 5—9. A similar prophecy is contained in Daniel. "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Most High," chap. vii. 27. Still more explicit is the book of Revelation—"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings ; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful," chap. xvii. 14. This exposition, which the scope of the psalm offers spontaneously to our view, is confirmed by the Chaldee paraphrase, and the translation which is found in the Bible printed by Barker,

the king's printer, 4to. London, 1615. The former reads thus ;—"Thy people, O house of Israel, who willingly labour in the law, thou shalt be helped by them in the day that thou goest to battle."—The latter is as follows, "thy people *shall come* willingly at the time of *assembling* thine army in holy beauty."

10th, Our author observes, that, "in his own time and manner, the divine Spirit will teach every elect person the nature, truth, and glory of the gospel of Christ; and shew him that in the divine Saviour, in his righteousness, sacrifice, intercession, and grace, all he wants, or can desire, is contained: 'He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' John xvi. 14, 15." p. 22.—For the illustration of this passage, it will be necessary to quote the preceding context: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you *things to come*. He shall glorify me," &c. A slight attention to the occasion on which these words were spoken, will be sufficient to convince us, that the persons to whom the promise was peculiarly made, were our Lord's apostles, who were about to be made qualified for the important office of making known to mankind the mystery of redemption; and that the office which the Spirit was to sustain, was that of *revealing* the deep

things of God,—(see 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10,)—such deep things as their capacity at that time, and the state of the Redeemer's work, did not admit of being revealed. Now, as the Spirit of *revelation* was confined to the apostolic age, it follows, that the passage under review cannot be justly applied to the general state of the Christian church.

11th, "Christ's commission," says our author, "reacheth to the infallible and everlasting salvation of the body and soul of every individual, who is given to him, who sees him, and believes on him. 'This is the Father's will which hath sent me.' &c. John vi. 39, 40." p. 26.—We have already shewn that none were given to Jesus Christ but his personal followers: and it is quite evident, from the scope of our Lord's discourse, that the security which he was to afford his followers, was perfectly consistent with the necessity of individual faithfulness; and that that security regarded solely his own faithfulness to the trust reposed in him by the Father. Our author's other quotations (from Heb. vi. 17—19. Rom. viii. 29—39) have already been examined.

12th, "In like manner," adds he, "Peter confirms the doctrine of his 'beloved brother Paul.' 1 Pet. i. 1—7. ii. 7—10." p. 27. See the exposition of these passages. "Thus likewise," continues our author, "says another apostle, 'Of *his own will* begat he us with the word of truth; that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures,' James i. 18."

p. 27. At the 12th verse the apostle lays down this position,—“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” The proof of this blessedness then follows,—“for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord had promised to them that love him.” But lest any one should infer, that, because a state of trial is appointed to precede the state of enjoyment, God must be the cause of temptation, he adds, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” On the contrary, we learn, “that every one is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” He further assures them, that, so far is God from being the author of sin, he is the author of all the good which they enjoy—ver. 17. And not only this, but he declares, that God, of his own benevolence, had adopted them into his family, and with such an exalted privilege, had conferred on them the honour of priority and precedency;—“Of his own will *begat* he us with the *word of truth*, that we should be a kind of *first fruits* of his creatures.” The import of the passage, then, seems to be, that God, of his own good pleasure, had conferred upon them the privilege of adoption; and that he had honoured them, as Jewish believers, with being, as it were, the first-fruits of the Christian harvest. The former position is supported by a passage in John’s Gospel. (chap. i. 12, 13.) “As many as received him, to them gave he power to *become the sons of God*, even to them

that *believe* on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of [*the will of*] God. That the Jewish believers were considered as the first-fruits of the Christian church, will also appear from the following passages—"That we should be to the praise of his glory who *first* trusted in Christ." Eph. i. 12. "For if the *first-fruit* be holy, the lump is also holy." Rom. xi. 26.

The result, then, of our investigation is, that the passage under review exhibits the sovereignty of God, first, in conferring upon believers in Jesus Christ the privilege of adoption unto God's family; and secondly, in conferring upon *Jewish* believers the honour of precedency in that adoption.

13th, "And our Lord says, 'My sheep hear my voice,' &c. John x. 27—30." p. 28.—See the exposition of this passage.

14th, "But the true Christian, habitually and sincerely abiding in Christ, and walking in all his ordinances and commandments; amidst his sharp conflicts with corruption and temptation, and his fears of future consequences, may find a most reviving cordial to refresh his drooping spirits, and renew his strength, from the assurance that Christ will make him at length more than conqueror, and 'preserve him from every evil work unto his heavenly kingdom.'" p. 28.—That Christ will make the true Christian, who habitually and sincerely abides in him, and walks in all his ordinances and commandments,

more than conqueror, and preserve him from every evil work unto his heavenly kingdom, is a truth which rests on the authority of heaven. But lest the reader should misunderstand the words which are marked as a quotation, we shall give the passage complete. "At my first answer, *no man* stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. } Notwithstanding, the *Lord* stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I *was delivered* out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord *shall deliver* me from every evil work, and *will preserve* me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." 2 Tim. iv. 16 to 18.—Now, it is quite evident, that the apostle's confidence consisted in the persuasion that he should be delivered from every evil work which his enemies might devise against him, and that the Lord would be faithful to his promises, in preserving him unto his heavenly kingdom; but still this persuasion might have consisted with a fear lest, through his own unfaithfulness, he himself should at last become a castaway.

15th, "'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him,' says our Lord to the woman of Samaria, meaning specially the Spirit of life and holiness, 'shall *never* thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.' It will spring up in all holy affections, and flow forth in all holy thoughts,

words, and actions, until it be perfected in eternal glory." p. 29.—For an exposition of the above-quoted passage, see on John iv. 14. It is evident that our author considers this passage as an absolute promise of the *continuance* of the divine water in the believer, and not a general declaration of the *nature* of the water itself. Considering the passage in this light, it is impossible to reconcile it with the following admission: "Seasons of slackness, and instances of transgression, he has to mourn over: and if he *steps farther out of the way*, his security lies in the following promises and assurances."—For an examination of these promises and assurances, see our exposition of Jer. xxxii. 39—42.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE
THAT ARE QUOTED BY THE REV. JOSEPH
FLETCHER, A.M. IN HIS DISCOURSE ON—"PER-
SONAL ELECTION AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY,"
—IN SUPPORT OF HIS VIEWS OF THE DIVINE
SOVEREIGNTY, AS IT REGARDS THE SALVATION
OF MANKIND.

1st, THE first passage that claims our attention is our author's text, Eph. i. 3, 4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath

blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him.”—We have in this passage, 1. An ascription of thanksgiving—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2. The reason of that ascription of thanksgiving—“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:” and 3. The ground of the blessedness for which thanksgiving is ascribed—“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him.”

On reviewing these particulars, we remark, that in the first, viz. the ascription of thanksgiving, we have an agent and an object. The *agent* is the apostle *Paul*—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” says he; and the *object* is *God*—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the second particular, viz. the reason of that ascription of thanksgiving, we have an agent, an action, and the object of that action. The *agent* is *God*—“who hath blessed us,” &c.; the *action* consists in *conferring* blessings—“who hath blessed us,” &c.; and the *object* of that action is *believers*—“who hath blessed us,” &c. In the third particular, viz. the ground of the blessedness for which the ascription of thanksgiving is made, we have an agent, an action, an object of that action, and an end for

which that action is done. The *agent* is God—"According as *he* hath chosen *us*," &c.; the *action* consists in *choosing*—"According as he *hath chosen us*," &c.; the *object* of the action is *believers*—"According as he hath chosen *us*," &c.; and the end of that action is *holiness* and *acceptance* with God—"that we should be *holy* and *without blame* before him."

In reference to the action and object of the second particular above mentioned, we would remark, 1. That the *action*—"who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ," may be considered in a threefold point of view: first, as expressing the divine purpose to confer those blessings; secondly, as expressing the procuring of them by the merit of Jesus Christ; and, thirdly, as expressing the bestowing of them on those who are made the recipients of them. We would remark, 2. That the *object*, expressed by the word *us*, evidently includes the writer, the Ephesian church, and, by implication, all believers that then, before, or since existed, or shall still exist. It is no less evident, that the apostle, by including the Ephesian church, took it for granted, that they were all true believers; for although the action, in the first two instances, that is, in the devising and providing of the blessings conferred, might be applied to the case of those who had not yet believed, but who should afterward believe, it could not, in the third instance, that is, in the conferring of the blessings, be applied to the case of any but true believers; unless we should suppose, either that the blessings were of an

external nature, or were not dependent on the exercise of faith in Jesus Christ. Now, although the apostle was, by *personal knowledge*, assured of his own participation of the blessings for which he rendered thanks, he could not be assured that the Ephesian church possessed them, except by the *assurance of faith*. We must, then, view his faith either as being grounded on a divine revelation, which informed him that they as individuals possessed those blessings, or as being grounded on a divine revelation and presumptive evidence—the divine revelation informing him that a promise of those blessings is made to all believers in Jesus Christ, and the presumptive evidence consisting in proofs which went to shew that the Ephesians were believers in Jesus Christ. Now as we have no proof that the apostle received any revelation from God concerning the state of the individuals composing the Ephesian church, we conclude, that the ground of his faith consisted in the revelation of God's promise to believers in general, and in the proofs which he had that the Ephesians were believers in Jesus Christ. Hence it follows, that the word *us* denotes certain persons, considered not in their individual, but in their characteristic, capacity, that is, as true believers in Jesus Christ.

Having thus determined what is meant by the word *us*, as used in the third verse, we infer, that it has the same application in the next verse,—“According as he hath chosen *us* in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and

without blame before him in love." The meaning of this verse, therefore, seems to be, that God, before the foundation of the world, purposed to select all believers in Jesus Christ to be his peculiar people,—holy and without blame before him: or, as expressed in the subsequent chapter,—“his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God had before *ordained* that they should walk in them,” having been “made *nigh* by the blood of Christ.”

2nd, Proceeding to p. 16, we read thus, “Grace is the beginning of glory, and glory is the perfection of grace. The possession of the one secures the enjoyment of the other: for ‘he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’”—Here we would observe, that the foregoing quotation, in its present disjointed form, is susceptible of a meaning which the inspired penman did not design it to have, that is, that God is unremitting and unchangeable in the operations of his grace. It is evidently susceptible of another meaning, viz. that God is faithful to the promises which he has made to his faithful people. Our author’s view, therefore, receives no support from a quotation so ambiguously expressed. The passage, to be represented in its scripture-form, ought always to be quoted thus: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is *meet for me to think this* of you all, *because* I have you in my heart.”

Philip. i. 6, 7. Now it is quite evident, that had our apostle meant that the possession of grace secures the enjoyment of glory, he would have made the *decree* or *promise* of God the ground of his confidence, and not the *reasonableness* of the thing; which was grounded on a consideration of the character of the Philippians. If he had done so, it would have set the question at rest for ever, and, in defending the position above laid down, we should not, as is commonly the case, be found to *omit* altogether the *ground* of the apostle's confidence. From this passage, therefore, a minister of the gospel is not warranted to declare to a promiscuous congregation, that the possession of grace secures the enjoyment of glory; but if he wishes to imitate the apostle, he may express his confidence concerning those whom he believes to be established in works of faith and love, rightly judging, that God will perform, until the day of Jesus Christ, the work which he has begun in them.

3rd, Our author remarks—"It may still be asked, if all be considered *as sinners*, and some are 'chosen in Christ Jesus,' why are others left to the consequence of their own voluntary and uncontrolled agency? Here it may be replied, that we can do nothing more than employ the language of our Lord when distinctly referring to this procedure of the infinite Jehovah, 'Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight,' Matth. xi. 26." p. 67.—We remark,
1. If it is a fact, that some sinners, *as sinners*, have

been chosen in Jesus Christ, while others have been left to the consequence of their own voluntary and uncontrolled agency, then a sufficient reason is assigned for the divine procedure, when we are informed, that it so seemed good in the sight of God,

2. But the phrase "chosen in Christ," as we have already seen, goes not to prove that some sinners, *as sinners*, have been chosen in Jesus Christ, but that some sinners, *as believers*, have been chosen out of the world unto a state of acceptance and holiness.

3. We have also elsewhere shewn, that these words, "Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight," did not refer, as our author affirms, to the above-assumed procedure of the infinite Jehovah, but to the sovereign communication of divine knowledge made to the immediate followers of Jesus Christ.

4. Further, the divine procedure alluded to by our Lord, cannot, except by contradicting scripture facts, be applied to our author's view of election, for many of the wise and prudent, from whom were concealed the things which were revealed unto our Lord's disciples, afterward believed, and doubtless, have since entered into the joy of their Lord.

5. Lastly, the passage can be shewn, even according to our author's admission, to be inapplicable to the general state of the Christian church, for he will readily admit that the age of *revelation* has long since terminated; but the passage to which our Lord's words as above quoted have reference, says—"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast *revealed* them unto babes."

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4th, Our author says, "It is unquestionably true, that in the sacred volume there are frequent references, in language most distinct and explicit, to an 'election'—an 'election of grace'—a 'purpose according to election'—an 'eternal purpose according to the good pleasure of the will of God.' In conformity with these allusions, we often read of the 'elect,' or 'chosen.' Now, are these the descriptions of *national* or of *personal* character?" p. 28.—To this question, we would reply in the language of antiquity, that God "has knit together his elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son Christ our Lord." Reserving our remarks on the term *election* till we come to consider the term *calling*, we would, in the mean time, go on to make a few observations—

1. Concerning the phrase *election of grace*. The phrase is used only by the apostle Paul, (Rom. xi. 5.) "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." At the first verse of the chapter, the apostle supposes this question to be put, "Hath God cast away his people?" His answer is, "God forbid; for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." He then affirms the contrary, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." That is, God hath not cast away, without hope of salvation, those whom he in former times acknowledged as his people. He next directs their attention to a case somewhat resembling the one in hand. "Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how

he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."— Here we see, that although there was a general, yet there was not an universal, defection from the worship of the true God. The seven thousand faithful servants of God, although unknown to the prophet, may be considered as the true elect of God, according to the Jewish economy. In like manner, the faithful servants of God, belonging to the Jewish nation, who lived in the apostle's days, might justly be denominated a remnant, according to the election of the Christian dispensation, which was founded by the free grace of God, and which the apostle styles the election of grace. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." The apostle then adds, if that remnant are accepted by God through grace, agreeably to the method of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, it follows, that their acceptance has not been effected by conforming to the law of life enjoined in the Mosaic dispensation. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." The conclusion of the whole matter, adds the apostle, is this; the Jews, trusting in their obedience to the law of Moses, as

entitling them to justification before God, have been excluded from the enjoyment of that blessing; for God had concluded them all in unbelief: but such of the Jews as have believed in Jesus Christ, "have been justified from all things from which they could not have been justified by the law of Moses," and, consequently, have been ranked among those, who, according to the gospel dispensation, are entitled the elect of God; while such of them as have not believed, have been permitted to continue in their blindness and obstinacy, which was specially foretold by the prophets of old. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written," &c.)

2d, We remark concerning the phrase, a "purpose according to election," that the apostle Paul makes use of it in Rom. ix. 11. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the *purpose of God according to election* might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth," &c.—For an exposition of this passage, see the remarks on the ninth chapter of the Romans. Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that the purpose here spoken of has a reference to the sovereign election of some individuals as sinners, according to our author's view of election, then it follows, that the reprobation of the non-elect is equally sovereign: for it is written, "The children, being not yet born, neither having done *any good or evil*," &c.—If our author is not prepared to

receive the doctrine of absolute reprobation, that is, reprobation without regard to man's voluntary transgressions, he must, of necessity, give up this passage as a proof of the doctrine contended for.

3d, The phrase, an "eternal purpose according to the good pleasure of the will of God," occurs in Eph. i. 9. and iii. 11. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, *according to his good pleasure* which he purposed in himself."—"According to the *eternal purpose* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."—We first ask what was the mystery of God's will which he purposed in himself *according to his good pleasure*? Was it to choose certain sinners, as such, that they might enjoy eternal life? or was it "that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, in the dispensation of the fulness of times?" chap. i. 10. Again, what was the *eternal purpose* which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord? Was it a purpose to choose certain sinners, as such, that they might enjoy eternal life? or a purpose "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel?" chap. iii. 6.

4th, Our author, as we have seen, observes, "In conformity with these allusions, we often read of the 'elect,' or 'chosen.' Now, are these the descriptions of *national* or of *personal* character?"—We have already admitted, in the language of the ancient church, that the epithet *elect* or *chosen*, when applied to believers in Jesus Christ, generally conveys the

idea of personal qualifications. But since our author's view of election makes it *eternal* as well as *personal*, we ought to expect, from the use of the words themselves, some scripture proof that it is so. Now, if the term *election* and the epithets *elect* and *chosen* are not, and cannot, be applied to the state of any until they *have believed* in Jesus Christ, it follows that such words afford no proof of election being *eternal* as well as *personal*, unless we should suppose the elect to have been eternal believers.

1. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them." Luke xviii. 7. The elect are here represented as a *praying* people.

2. "And except those days should be shortened, there should be no flesh saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matth. xxiv. 22—24. If the elect could not have been deceived, they must have been believers in Jesus Christ.

3. "Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect." Titus i. 1. The elect are here represented as a believing people.

4. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Rom. viii. 33. The elect are here considered as a justified people.

5. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved," &c. Col. iii. 12. The elect of God are here characterized as holy and beloved.

6. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." 2 Tim. ii. 10. If the apostle, in this place, considered the elect to be the body of Christ, and since the body of Christ is synonymous with the church of Christ, then it follows that the elect are members of the church of Christ. The foregoing reasoning is founded on the following passage as collated with the foregoing—"Whereof I Paul am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his *body's* sake, which is the *church*." Col. i. 23, 24.

7. Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," 1 Pet. i. 2. Thus it is evident, that the persons to whom Peter addressed his epistle, were the elect of God, and that they became such "through sanctification of the Spirit."

8. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." The elect are here considered as believers.

9. "But ye are a chosen generation." 1 Pet. ii. 9. Let it be remarked that they had previously believed.

10. "These shall make war with the Lamb," "and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful," Rev. xvii. 4. It is obvious that they had previously believed.

11. "Many be called, but few chosen." Matth. xx. 16. The persons chosen, are here understood as having believed in the interval between the period of their being called, and that of their being chosen.

12. "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, *saluteth* you." 1 Pet. v. 13.

It is evident, that the above quoted passages afford us no ground to infer, that the elect are chosen before they believe; but seem to represent election, rather as a *separation* of those that shall be saved from the ungodly world, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, than as a limitation of their number, effected by the sovereign purpose of God, from all eternity. The same conclusion may be drawn from a consideration of the following passages taken from the Old Testament. "Behold my servant, whom I *uphold*; mine elect, in whom my soul delights." Is. xlii. 1. "Yet now hear, O Jacob my *servant*; and Israel whom I have *chosen*." Idem. xlv. 1. "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine *elect* shall inherit it, and my *servants* shall dwell there." Idem. lxxv. 9.

5th, Our author observes (p. 72.) that "some, whose views on other subjects are accordant with the system of evangelical truth, admit, that the terms in

question are applied to individual character, and denote the enjoyment of personal privileges ; but they contend, that this election is founded on the divine foreknowledge of faith and holiness ;” but “ the actual production of faith and holiness, is not the cause, but the consequence of the divine purpose.—‘ He hath chosen us—*that we might be holy.*’ ”—We would just remark, (and the remark has been frequently made,) that election, in the scriptural sense of the word, regards the separated state of the church of Christ ; which state was divinely appointed from eternity, without reference to the conditional performance of any duties on the part of those who should afterward be initiated into it, they being, as a body, “ created unto good works, which God *had before ordained* that they should walk in them.” It follows therefore, that election cannot be founded on the divine foreknowledge of faith and holiness, -for these, being adjuncts of the state of election, and having been appointed as such by the sovereign will of God, cannot, in the nature of things, be the foundation of that state. But if faith is the divinely appointed means of admission into the state of divine election, the question to be determined is, whether or not the operation of faith in the mind of man is as independent of his natural will, as is the appointment of the state into which he is by faith admitted ?

6th, On the subject of *effectual calling*, our author remarks, that the “ distinction between the general invitation,” of the gospel, “ and *effectual calling*, is

directly and explicitly warranted in the sacred writings." "In every instance in which personal religion is described, the energy of the Holy Spirit is distinctly recognised as the immediate cause of its formation. And what is this, but 'effectual calling,' or, as the apostle terms it, thus sanctioning the use of the very word against which such exceptions are taken—'the *effectual* working of his power.'" p. 79.—Our author here asserts, that the energy of the Holy Spirit, as displayed in the conversion of the sinner, is synonymous with *effectual calling*, and that the apostle's language—"the effectual working of his power,"—is descriptive of the same divine operation. We shall, in the first place, investigate the import of the apostle's phraseology. In order to effect that purpose, it will be necessary to quote the passage entire.—"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," Eph. iii. 7, 8. It is quite obvious, that "the gift of the grace of God," which was given to the apostle, was not that of the divine *operation* but of the divine *favour*—"Unto me is this grace given, that *I should preach*," &c. Again—"If ye have heard of the *dispensation of the grace of God*, which is given me to you-ward: how that by *revelation* he made known unto me the mystery," &c. ver. 2, 3. Now if we turn back to the first chapter,

we shall find, from the use of similar language, that the apostle, by the phrase—"the effectual working of his power,"—meant to express the exalted honour and privilege which the salvation of the gospel conferred, partly as it regarded his appointment to the ministerial office, and partly as it regarded the benefits which resulted to the Gentiles by the gospel dispensation. The passage above referred to is as follows—"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ," &c. ver. 19, 20. In our exposition of this passage we shewed, that the working of God's mighty power, here mentioned, regarded not the efficiency of the Holy Ghost, but the glory of the divine purposes and appointment. It lies then with the reader to decide, whether the effectual working spoken of by the apostle regards the energy of the Holy Spirit as exerted in conversion, or the glory which is manifested in the gracious dispensation of the gospel.

Having examined the evidence that there is in the above-quoted passage for warranting us to use the phrase *effectual calling*, we come, in the next place, to examine the evidence that there is for applying the term *calling* to the energy of the Holy Spirit, as manifested in the work of conversion.

1. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Rom. xi. 29. We shewed in our exposition of this passage, that the word *calling*, as here used, signifies, generally, a *dispensation* of grace

or providence, and, particularly the favour which God displayed when he entered into covenant with Abraham and his posterity.

2. "For ye see your calling, brethren." 1 Cor. i. 26. Our exposition of this passage and its context, led us to consider the term *calling* as being synonymous with *dispensation*, and, in this place, as signifying the Christian dispensation.

3. "Let every man abide in the same calling." 1 Cor. vii. 20. Here the word signifies the state of civil life in which individuals are providentially placed.

4. "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling." Eph. i. 18. Here the word *calling* likewise signifies *dispensation*, and the hope of his calling, evidently means, the hope of the gospel dispensation.

5. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the *vocation* wherewith ye are called." Eph. iv. 1. The word *vocation* or *calling* seems, in this passage, to have the same import as it has in the preceding case.

6. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Eph. iv. 4. The hope of the gospel is here said to be *one* both to Jew and Gentile.

7. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ." Philip. iii. 14. The *mark* is the resurrection, the *prize* is eternal life, and the *calling* is the gospel dispensation.

8. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." 2 Thess. i. 10, 11. The calling here evidently means the privileged state which consists in glorifying and admiring Christ at his second coming.

9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works," &c. 2 Tim. i. 9. The apostle's meaning in this passage obviously is, that the gracious state in which believers stand, is not effected by human merit, but by divine grace.

10. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Heb. iii. 1. Here, as in many of the foregoing instances, the word *calling* evidently signifies the privileged state of the gospel dispensation.

11. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." 2 Pet. i. 10. Hitherto we have found the word *calling* generally to signify *God's* calling, consequently, as such, it stands in need of no confirmation from *human weakness*. The apostle, in the passage before us, seems to give it a modified meaning, that is, he exhorts believers not to *confirm* the *dispensation* which God has graciously bestowed, but to *secure* their own *interest* in it. It may also be proper here to state the dis-

tion that seems to subsist between the terms *calling* and *election*. As it regards the gracious *state* in which believers are placed, they are of the same import, but as it regards the *relation* which believers sustain towards God, and towards the world, they are of a different import. Thus, *calling* denotes the relation which believers bear towards *God*, he being the *founder* of the state in which they are placed; and *election* denotes the relation which believers bear towards the world, they having been *chosen out of the world*.

It is obvious, from the various passages that have been just under consideration, that the word *calling* uniformly means a *state*, and never an *operation*. The same, we think, will appear from the passages in which the verb *call* is found. And here we may observe, that the verb *call* generally signifies not to *invite*, but to *instate*.

1. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Gal. i. 6.

2. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body." Col. iii. 15.

3. "And no man taketh *this honour* unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Heb. v. 4.

4. "Who called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, *that I might preach him among the heathen*." Gal. i. 15.

5. "For even *hereunto* were ye called: because

Christ also suffered for us, giving us an example, that *ye should follow his steps*." 1 Pet. ii. 21.

6. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are *thereunto* called, that ye should inherit a blessing." 1 Pet. iii. 9.

7. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto *liberty*," Gal. v. 13.

8. "For the promise [of the Holy Ghost] is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 39.

9. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son." 1 Cor. i. 9.

Now, as the present tense is often used in Scripture with a sense of continuation including past, present, and future, so the present tense of the verb *call* is found to denote the favour of him who has already instated, and continues in that state, those who have believed in Jesus Christ.

1. "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth *you*." Gal. v. 8.

2. "Faithful is he that calleth *you*." 1 Thess. v. 24.

3. That the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Rom. ix. 11.

It will also be observed, on examining the following passages, that the verb *call* denotes a *right* to the possession of certain privileges or blessings, and

sometimes an *obligation* to exercise certain dispositions and perform certain duties.

1. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on *eternal life, whereunto* thou art also called." 1 Tim. vi. 12.

2. "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his *kingdom and glory*." 1 Thess. ii. 12.

3. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his *eternal glory*." 1 Pet. v. 10.

4. "Through the knowledge of him that hath called us to *glory and virtue*." 2 Pet. i. 3.

5. "For God hath not called us unto *uncleanness*, but unto *holiness*." 1 Thess. iv. 7.

The participle and the adjective of the same origin sometimes denote the persons who are instated in the possession of the blessings of the gospel.

1. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii. 28.

2. "But unto them which are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 24.

3. "That the called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Heb. ix. 15.

The adjective *called* sometimes denotes persons who have been put in possession of certain ennobling privileges.

1. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called *apostle*." Rom. i. 1. See 1 Cor. i. 1.

2. "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." Rom. i. 6.

3. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints." Ibid. ver. 7.

Sometimes the adjective denotes persons to whom privileges are offered, without their being accepted. Thus, "The called are many, but the chosen few." Matth. xx. 16. xxii. 14.

The other quotations bearing on the subject of the divine sovereignty which our author has made, having been already examined, nothing more will be deemed necessary than to give, for the reader's satisfaction, the references to the leading passages. These are as follow :—Matth. xxv. 34. p. 36. Matth. xi. 26. p. 37. Rom. viii. 28—30. p. 36. John vi. 37—39. xvii. 20, 24. p. 37. Acts xiii. 48. p. 33. 1 Thess. i. 2. p. 33. 1 Cor. iv. 7. p. 37, 38.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ECONOMY OF THE DIVINE INFLUENCE
AS IT REGARDS THE RECOVERY OF MANKIND
TO THE IMAGE OF GOD.

1st, THOSE who say, that divine influence is necessary for the conversion and sanctification of man, adduce the following passages of Scripture: 1. For *conversion*—"He that hath *begun* a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." Philip. i. 6. "He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 6. 2. For *sanctification*—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." 1 Thess. v. 23. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. viii. 13.

2d, Those who say that the divine influence is not irresistible, quote the following passages of Scripture: 1. In *conversion*—"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done

in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." Luke x. 13. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts vii. 51. 2. In *sanctification*—"Quench not the Spirit." 1 Thess. v. 19. "Grieve not the Spirit of God by which ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. iv. 30.

3rd, Those who hold that the grace of God works irresistibly in conversion, support their opinion on the following arguments: 1. First, if the grace of God is not irresistible in man's conversion and sanctification, the honour of God would be sullied, for salvation would then be by *works*, and not through *grace*. 2. And, secondly, that such is the corruption of human nature, that were the divine influence to be at the will of sinful man, conversion and sanctification would never be effected.

4th, To these objections it is replied, 1. That there is no merit in receiving what God has graciously provided, and freely bestows. 2. And that the second objection is a begging of the question, and therefore is not an argument.

CONCLUSION.

WITHOUT wishing to interfere with the reader's right to deliberate on the subjects that have been presented to his consideration in the foregoing pages, we would, with the design to promote Christian charity and forbearance, just remark, that one result of our investigations entirely corresponds with the practice of judicious divines among those who espouse the doctrines that have been here brought to the test of Scripture. That result is, that, whether the evidence for the doctrines of Calvinism is substantiated, or not, those doctrines are evidently not adduced as necessary principles of christian practice; consequently those who oppose, as well as those who espouse them, may possess that faith which worketh by love and purifieth the heart. That judicious divines of the Calvinistic school do not adopt the peculiarities of their creed as principles of christian conduct, is evident from the mode which they adopt in treating different classes of religious inquirers. To those who are startled at the doctrine of the decrees, and disheartened by a limited view of the atonement, they say,—Your duty, as sinners, is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for the ungodly. To those who say, that they must patiently wait the day of God's power, they answer,—The gospel declares, for

your direction and encouragement, "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." To those who rely on the doctrine of final perseverance, and who nevertheless live in sin, they declare,—that no man who lives in sin has any just ground to think that he ever was in a state of grace, for he that has the hope of seeing Christ as he is, "purifieth himself even as he is pure."

The most superficial reader of Scripture must have observed, that divine revelation contains nothing that is calculated to excite or gratify the disposition of an unbridled curiosity; for although it contains truths of the sublimest nature, those truths are invariably exhibited as motives to action, and never as matters of mere speculation. Such as curiously inquire whether "there are many that be saved," it earnestly exhorts to "strive to enter in at the strait gate." To such as would be desirous of knowing the mode of the Spirit's operation on the human heart, it would say—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit:" while it would at the same time assure them that, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" and that, "if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live."

Now, if it appears that the religion of Christ does not consist in a set of opinions floating in the head, but in the government of the heart and the regulation of the life, we ought to make the fruits of faith, and not the profession of it, the subordinate reason of our Christian love. And in order to cherish this love, we ought always to be more ready to ascribe the errors of others, no less than our own, to human weakness, than to incorrigible wickedness; ever bearing in mind, that the sign by which Jesus Christ has designated his followers, is that of love to one another.

Finally, if it is natural for every man to defend, and not to examine, opinions which he has long cherished, it becomes us therefore to be more willing to be convinced ourselves, than to endeavour to convince others: and if we should fail to gratify ourselves by bringing over others to our way of thinking, let us zealously labour to glorify God by "provoking one another to love and to good works."

Now, to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all the honour and glory of every good work, world without end. Amen.

THE END.

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London: H. Fisher, Son, & Co. Printers.



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